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Story of the Plébiscite.

TOLD BY ONE OF THE SEVEN MILLION FIVE HUNDRED THOUSAND
WHO VOTED "YES."

I.



AM writing this history for sensible people. It is my own story during the calamitous war we have just gone through. I write it to show those who shall come after us how many evil-minded people there are in the world, and how little we ought to trust fair words ; for we have been deceived in this village of ours after a most abominable fashion ; we have been deceived by all sorts of people —by the sous-préfets, by the préfet, and by the ministers ; by the curé, by the official gazettes ; in a word, by each and all.

Could any one have imagined that there are so many deceivers in this world ? No, indeed ; it requires to be seen with one's own eyes to be believed.

In the end we have had to pay dearly. We have given up our hay, our straw, our corn, our flour, our cattle ; and that was not enough. Finally, they gave up *us*, our own selves. They said to us : " You are no longer Frenchmen ; you are Prussians ! We have taken your young men

to fight in the war ; they are dead, they are prisoners : now settle with Bismarck any way you like ; your business is none of ours ! ”

But these things must be told plainly ; so I will begin at the beginning, without getting angry.

You must know, in the first place, that I am a miller in the village of Rothalp, in the valley of Metting, at Dosenheim, between Lorraine and Alsace. It is a large and fine village of 130 houses, wanting neither its curé Daniel, nor its schoolmaster Adam Fix, nor principal inhabitants of every kind—wheelwrights, blacksmiths, shoemakers, tailors, publicans, brewers, dealers in eggs, butter, and poultry ; we even have two Jews, Solomon Kaan, a pedlar, and David Hertz, cattle-dealer.

This will show you what was our state of prosperity before this war ; for the wealthier a village is, the more strangers it draws : every man finds a livelihood there, and works at his trade.

We had not even occasion to fetch our butcher's-meat from town. David killed a cow now and then, and retailed all we wanted for Sundays and holidays.

I, Christian Weber, have never been further than thirty leagues from this commune. I inherited my mill from my grandfather, Marcel Desjardins, a Frenchman from the neighbourhood of Metz, who had built it in the time of the Swedish war, when our village was but a miserable hamlet. Twenty-six years ago I married Catherine Amos, daughter of the old forest-ranger. She brought me a hundred louis for her dowry. We have two children—a daughter, Grédel, and a son, Jacob, who are still with us at home.

You must know besides that I have a cousin, George Weber, who went off more than thirty years ago to serve in the Marines in Guadaloupe. He has even been in active service there. It was he who beat the drum on the forecastle of the ship *Boussole*, as he has told me a hundred times, whilst the fleet was bombarding St. John d'Ulloa. Afterwards he was promoted to be sergeant ; then he sailed to North America, for the cod-fisheries ; and into the Baltic, on board a small Danish vessel engaged in the coal-trade. George was always intent upon making a fortune. About 1850 he returned to Paris, and established a manufactory of matches in the Rue Mouffetard in Paris ; and as he is really a very handsome tall man, with a dark complexion, bold-looking, and with a quick eye, at last he married a rich widow without children, Madame Marie Anne Finck, who was keeping an inn in that neighbourhood. They became rich. They bought land in our part of the country through the agency of Monsieur Fingado, the solicitor, to whom he sent regularly the price of every piece of land. At last, on the death of the old carpenter, Joseph Briou, he became the purchaser of his house, to live there with his wife, and to keep a public-house on the road to Metting.

This took place last year, during the time of the Plébiscite, and cousin George came to visit his house before taking his wife, Marie Anne, to it.

As for me, I was mayor ; I had received orders from M. le Sous-Préfet

to give public notice of the Plébiscite, and to request all well-disposed persons to vote "Yes" if they desired to preserve peace; because all the ruffians in the country were going to vote No, to have war.

This is exactly what I did, making everybody promise to come without fail, and sending the *bangard* Martin Kapp to carry the voting tickets to the very farthest cottages up the mountains.

Cousin George arrived the evening before the Plébiscite. I received him very kindly, as one ought to receive a rich relation who has no children. He seemed quite pleased to see us, and dined with us in the best of tempers. He carried with him in a small leather trunk clothes, shoes, shirts—everything that he required. He wanted nothing. That day everything went on well; but the next day, hearing the notices cried by the rural policeman, he went off to Reibell's brewery, which was full of people, and began to preach against the Plébiscite.

I was just then at the mayoralty-house with my official scarf on, receiving the tickets, when suddenly my deputy Placiard came to tell me, in high indignation, that certain miserable wretches were attacking order; that one of them was at the *Cruchon d'Or*, and that half the village were very nearly murdering him.

Immediately I went down, and ran to the public-house where my cousin was calling them all asses, affirming that the Plébiscite was for war; that the Emperor, the ministers, the prefects, the generals and the bishops were deceiving the people; that all those men were acting a part to get our money from us, and much besides to the same purpose.

I, from the passage, could already hear him shouting these things in a terrible voice, and I said to myself, "The poor fellow has been drinking."

If George had not been my cousin; if he had not been quite capable some day of disinheriting my children, I should certainly have arrested him at once, and had him conveyed under safe keeping to Sarrebourg; but, on giving due weight to these considerations, I resolved to put an end to this bad business, and I cried to the people who were crowding the passage, "Make room, you fellows, make room!"

Those enraged creatures, seeing the scarf, gave way in all directions; and then discovering my cousin, seated at a table in the right-hand corner, I said, "Cousin! what are you thinking of, to create such a scandal?"

He, too, was overcome at the sight of the scarf, having served in the navy, and knowing that there is no man who claims more respect than a mayor; that he has a right to lay hands upon you, and send you to the lock-up—and, if you resist, to send you as far as Sarrebourg and Nancy. Reflecting upon this, he calmed down in a moment, for he had not been drinking at all, as I supposed at first, and he was saying these things without bitterness, without anger, conscientiously, and through regard for his fellow-citizens.

Therefore, he replied to me quietly: "Mr. Mayor, look after your elections! See that certain rogues up there—as there are rogues everywhere—don't stuff into the ballot-box handfuls of *Yeses* instead of *Noes*

while your back is turned. This has often happened! And then pray don't trouble yourself about me. In the Gazette of the Government, it is declared that every man shall be free to maintain his own opinions, and to vote as he pleases; if my mouth is stopped, I shall protest in the newspapers."

Hearing that he would protest, to avoid a worse scandal I answered him: "Say what you please: no one shall declare that we have put any constraint upon the elections; but, you men, you know what you have to do."

"Yes, yes," shouted all the people in the room and down the passage, lifting their hats. "Yes, Monsieur le Maire; we will listen to nothing at all. Whether they talk all day or say nothing, it is all the same to us."

And they all went off to vote, leaving George alone.

M. le Curé Daniel, seeing them coming out, came from his parsonage to place himself at their head. He had preached in the morning in favour of the Plébiscite, and there was not a single No in the box.

If my cousin had not had the large meadow above the mill, and the finest acres in the country, he would have been an object of contempt for the rest of his days; but a rich man, who has just bought a house, an orchard, a garden, and has paid ready-money for everything, may say whatever he pleases, especially when he is not listened to and the people go and do the very opposite of what he has been advising them.

Well, this is the way with the elections for the Plébiscite with us, and just the same thing went on throughout our canton: at Phalsbourg,—which had been abundantly placarded against the Plébiscite, and where they carried their audacity even to watching the mayor and the ballot-box—out of fifteen hundred electors, military and civil, there were only thirty-two Noes.

It is quite clear that things were making favourable progress, and that M. le Sous-Préfet could not but be perfectly satisfied with our behaviour.

I must also mention that we were in want of a parish road to Hangeville; that we had been promised a pair of church-bells, and the glandée, or right of feeding our hogs upon the acorns in autumn; and that we were aware that all the villages which voted the wrong way got nothing, whilst the others—in consideration of the good councillors they had sent up, either to the arrondissement or the department—might always reckon upon a little money from the tax-collector for the necessities of their parish. Monsieur le Sous-Préfet had pointed out these advantages to me; and naturally a good mayor will inform his subordinates. I did so. Our deputies, our councillors-general, our councillors of the arrondissement, were all on the right side! By these means we had already gained the right to the dead leaves and our great wash-houses. We only sought our own good, and we much preferred seeing other villages pay the ministers, the senators, the marshals, the bishops, and the princes, to paying them ourselves. So that all that cousin George could say to us about the interest of all, and the welfare of the nation, made not the least impression upon us.

I remember that that very day of the Plébiscite, when it was already

known that we had all voted right, and that we should get our two bells with the parish road—I remember that my cousin and I had, after supper, a great quarrel, and that I should certainly have put him out, if it had not been he.

We were taking our *petit verre* of *kirch*, smoking our pipes, with our elbows on the table; my wife and Grédel had already gone to bed, when all at once he said to me : “ Listen to me, Christian. Save the respect I owe you as mayor, you are all a set of geese in this village, and it is a very fortunate thing that I am come here, that you may have at least one sensible man among you.”

I was going to get angry, but he said :

“ Just let me finish ; if you had but spent a couple of years at Paris, you would see things a little plainer : but at this moment, you are like a nest of hungry jays, blind and unfeathered ; they open their bills, and they cry ‘ Jaques,’ to call down food from heaven. Those who hear them climb up the tree, twist their necks, and put them into the pot laughing. That is your position. You have confidence in your enemies, and you give them power to pluck you just as they please. If you appointed upright men in your districts as deputies, councillors-general, instead of taking whoever the prefecture recommends, would not the Emperor and the other honourable men above be obliged then to leave you the money which the tax-collector makes you pay in excess ? Could all those people then enrich themselves at your expense, and amass immense fortunes in a few years ? Would you then see old baskets with their bottoms out, fellows to whom you would not have trusted a halfpenny before the *coup-d'état*—would you see them become millionaires, rolling in gold—gliding along in carriages with their wives, their children, their servants and their ballet-dancers ? The préfets, the sous-prefets say to you : ‘ Go on voting right—you shall have this—you shall have that’—things which you have a right to demand in virtue of the taxes you pay, but which are granted to you as favours,—roads, washhouses, schools, &c. Would you not have them in your own right, if the money which is taken from you were left in the commune ? What does the Emperor do for you ? He plunders you—that is all. Your money, he shows it to you before each election, as they show a child a stick of sugar-candy to make it laugh ; and when the election is over he puts it back into his pocket. The trick is played.”

“ How can he put that money into his pocket ? ” I asked, full of indignation. “ Are not the accounts presented every year in the Chambers ? ”

Then he shrugged his shoulders, and answered : “ You are not sharp, Christian ; it is not so difficult to present accounts to the Chambers. So many chassepots—which have no existence ! So much munition of war, of which no one knows anything. So much for retiring pensions ; so much for the substitutes’ fund ; so much for changes of uniform. The uniforms are changed every year ; that is good for business. Do the deputies inquire into these matters ? Who checks the Ministers’ budgets ? And the deputies whom the Minister of the Interior

has recommended to you, whom you have appointed like fools, and whom the Emperor would throw up at the very first election, if those gentlemen breathed a syllable about visiting the arsenals and examining into the accounts—what a farce ! Why, yesterday, passing through Phalsbourg, I got upon the ramparts, and I saw there guns of the time of Herod, upon gun-carriages eaten up by worms and painted over to conceal the rottenness. These very guns, I do believe, are recast every third or fourth year —upon paper—with your money. Ah, my poor Christian, you are not very sharp, nor the other people in our village either. But the men you send as deputies to Paris—they are sharp, too sharp."

He broke out into a laugh, and I could have sent him back to Paris.

" Do you know what you want ? " said he then, filling his pipe and lighting it, for I made no reply, being too much annoyed ; " what you want is not good sense, it is not honesty. All of us peasants, we still possess some good sense and honesty. And we believe, moreover, in the honesty of others, which proves that we ourselves have a little left ! No, what you want is education ; you have asked for bells, and bells you will get ; but all the school you have is a miserable shed, and your only school-master is old Adam Fix, who can teach his children nothing, by reason that he knows nothing himself. Well now, if you were to ask for a really good school, there would be no money in the public fund. There is money enough for bells, but for a good schoolmaster, for a large well-ventilated room, for deal benches and tables, for pictures, slates, maps and books there is nothing ; for if you had good schools, your children could read, write, keep accounts ; they would soon be able to look into the ministers' accounts, and that is exactly what his Majesty wishes to avoid. You understand now, cousin ; this is the reason why you have no school and you have bells."

Then he looked knowingly at me : " And, do you know," said he, after a few moments' thought, " do you know how much all the schools in France cost ? I am not referring to the great schools of medicine, and law, and chemistry, the colleges, and the lycéums, which are schools for wealthy young men, able to keep themselves in large cities, and to pay for their own maintenance. I am speaking of schools for the people, elementary schools, where reading and writing are taught, the two first things which a man must know, and which distinguish him from the savages who roam naked in the American forests ? Well, the deputies whom the people themselves send to protect their interests at Paris, and whose first thought, if they are not altogether thieves, ought to be to discharge their duty towards their constituencies—these deputies have never voted for the schools of the people a larger sum than seventy-five millions. The state contributes ten millions as its share ; the commune, the departments, the fathers and mothers do the rest. Seventy-five millions to educate the people in a great country like ours—it is a disgrace. The United States spend six times the amount. But, on the other hand, for the War budget we pay five hundred millions ; even that would not be too much if we had five

hundred thousand men under arms, according to the calculation which has been made of what it costs per diem for each man; but for an army of two hundred and fifty thousand men, it is too much by half. What becomes of the other three hundred millions? If they were made available to build schools, to pay able masters, to furnish retreats for workmen in their declining days, I should have nothing to say against it; but to ring in the pockets of MM. the senators and the bells of MM. the curés, I consider that too dear."

As cousin George bothered my mind with all his arguments, I felt a wish to go to bed, and I said to him, "All that, cousin, is very fine, but it is getting late, and besides it has nothing to do with the Plébiscite."

I had risen; but he laid his hand upon my arm and said, "Let us talk a little longer—let me finish my pipe. You say that this has nothing to do with the Plébiscite; but that Plébiscite is for all this nice arrangement of things to go on. If the nation believes that all is right, that enough money is left to it, and that even it can spare a little more; that the ministers, the senators and the princes are not yet sufficiently fat and flourishing; that the Emperor has not bought enough in foreign countries; well, it will say with this Plébiscite, 'Go on, pray go on—we are quite satisfied.' Does that suit your ideas?"

"Yes. I had rather that than war," said I, in a very bad temper. "The Empire is peace; I vote for peace."

Then George himself rose up, emptying his pipe on the edge of the table, and said: "Christian, you are right. Let us go to bed. I repent having bought old Briou's house: decidedly the people in these parts are too stupid. You quite grieve me."

"Oh, I don't want to grieve you," said I, angrily; "I have quite as much sense as you."

"What!" said he, "you the mayor of Rothalp, in daily communication with the sous-préfet, you believe that the object of this Plébiscite is to confirm peace?"

"Yes, I do."

"What, you believe that? Come now.. Have we not peace at the present moment? Do we want a Plébiscite to preserve it? Do you suppose that the Germans are taken in by it? Our peasants, to be sure, they are misled; they are indoctrinated at the curé's house, at the mayoralty-house, at the sous-préfecture; but not a single workman in Paris is a dupe of this pernicious scheming. They all know that the Emperor and the Ministers want war; that the generals and the superior officers demand it. Peace is a good thing for tradesmen, for artisans, for peasants; but the officers are tired of being cramped up in the same ranks. Already the inferior officers have been disgusted with the profession through the crowds of nobles, Jesuits, and canting hypocrites of all sorts who are thrust into the army. The troops are not animated with a good spirit; they want promotion, or they will end by rousing themselves into a passion, especially when they see the Prussians under our noses

helping themselves to anything they please without asking our leave. You don't understand that! There," said he, "I am sleepy. Let us go to bed."

Then I began to understand that my cousin had learnt many things at Paris, and that he knew more of politics than I did. But that did not prevent me from being in a great rage with him; for the whole of that day he had done nothing but cause trouble, and I said to myself that it was impossible to live with such a brute.

My wife, at the top of the landing, had heard us disputing; but as we were going upstairs, she came all smiles to meet us, holding the candle, and saying: "Oh, you have had a great deal to tell each other this evening! You must have had enough. Come, cousin, let me take you to your room; there it is. From your window you may see the woods in the moonlight; and here is your bed, the best in the house. You will find your cotton nightcap under the pillow."

"Very nice, Catherine, thank you," said George.

"And I hope you will sleep comfortably," said she, returning to me.

This wise woman, full of excellent good sense, then said to me, while I was undressing: "Christian, what were you thinking of, to contradict your cousin? Such a rich man, and who can do us so much good by and by! What does the plébiscite signify? What can that bring us in? Whatever your cousin says to you, say 'Amen' after it. Remember that his wife has relations, that she will want to get everything on her side. Mind you don't quarrel with George. A fine meadow below the mill, and an orchard on the hill-side, are not found every day in the way of a cow."

I saw at once that she was right, and I inwardly resolved never to contradict George again, who might himself alone be worth to us far more than the Emperor, the ministers, the senators, and all the establishment together; for every one of those people thought of his own interests alone, without even casting away a thought upon us: and of course we ought to do the same as they did, since they had succeeded so well in sewing gold lace upon all their seams, fattening and living in abundance in this world, without mentioning the promises that the bishops made to them for the next.

Thinking upon these things, I lay calmly down, and soon fell asleep.

II.

The next day early, cousin George, my son Jacob, and myself, after having eaten a crust of bread and taken a glass of wine standing, harnessed our horses, and put them into our two carts to go and fetch my cousin's wife and furniture at the Lützelbourg station.

Before coming into our country, George had ordered his house to be whitewashed and painted from top to bottom; he had laid new floors, and replaced the old shingle roof with tiles. Now the paint was dry, the doors and windows stood open day and night; the house could not be robbed, for there was nothing in it. My cousin, seeing that all was right, had just written to his wife that she might bring their goods and chattels with her.

So we started about six in the morning ; upon the road the people of Hangeviller, of Metting, and Vechem, and those who were going to market in the town were singing and shouting “*Vive l’Empereur !*”

Everywhere they had voted “Yes” for peace. It was the greatest fraud that had ever been perpetrated ; by the way in which the ministers, the prefects, and the Government newspapers had explained the Plébiscite, everybody had imagined that he had really voted peace.

Cousin George hearing this, said, “Oh, you poor country folks, how I pity you for being such imbeciles ! How I pity you for believing what these pickpockets tell you !”

That was how he styled the Emperor’s government, and naturally I felt my indignation rise ; but Catherine’s sound advice came back into my mind, and I thought, “Hold your tongue, Christian ; don’t say a word—that’s your best plan.”

All along the road we saw the same spectacle ; the soldiers of the 84th, garrisoned at Phalsbourg, looked as pleased as men who have won the first prize in a lottery ; the colonel declared that the men who did not vote “Yes” would be unworthy of being called Frenchmen. Every man had voted “Yes ;” for a good soldier knows nothing but his orders.

So having passed before the gate of France, we came down to the Baraques and then reached Lützelbourg. The train from Paris had passed a few minutes before ; the whistle could yet be heard under the Saverne tunnel.

My cousin’s wife, with whom I was not yet acquainted, was standing by her luggage on the platform ; and seeing George coming up, she cried, full of joy, “Ah ! is that you ? and here is cousin.”

She kissed us both heartily, gazing at us, however, with some surprise, perhaps on account of our blouses and our great wide-brimmed black hats. But no ! it could not be that ; for Marie Anne Finck was a native of Wasselonne, in Alsace, and the Alsatians have always worn the blouse and wide-brimmed hat as long as I can remember. But this tall, thin woman, with her large brown eyes, as bustling, quick, and active as gunpowder, after having passed thirty years at Paris, having first been cook at Krantheimer’s, at a place called the Barrière de Montmartre, and then in five or six other inns in the great city, might well be somewhat astonished at seeing such simple people as we were ; and no doubt it also gave her pleasure.

That is my idea.

“The carts are there, wife,” cried George, in high spirits. “We will load the biggest with as much furniture as we can, and the rest upon the smaller one. You will sit in front. There—look up there—that’s the Castle of Lützelbourg, and that pretty little wooden house close by, covered all over with vine, that is a chalet, Father Hoffmann-Forty’s chalet, the distiller of cordials ; you know the cordial of Phalsbourg.”

He showed her everything.

Then we began to load ; that big Yéri, who takes the tickets at the

gate, and who carries the parcels to Monsieur André's omnibus, comes to lend us a hand. And the two carts being loaded about twelve o'clock, my cousin's wife seated in front of the foremost one upon a truss of straw, we started at a quiet pace for the village, where we arrived about three o'clock. But I remember one thing, which I will not omit to mention. As we were coming out of Lützelbourg, a heavy waggon-load of coal was coming down the hill, a lad of sixteen or seventeen leading the horse by the bridle; at the door of the last house, a little child of five years old, sitting on the ground, was looking at our carts passing by; he was out of the road, he could not be in any one's way, and was sitting there perfectly quiet, when the boy, without any reason, gave him a lash with his whip, which made the child cry aloud.

My cousin's wife saw that.

"Why did that boy strike the child?" she inquired.

"That's a coalheaver," George answered. "He comes from Sarrebrück. He is a Prussian. He struck the child because he is a French child."

Then my cousin's wife wanted to get down to fall upon the Prussian; she cried to him, "You great coward, you lazy dog, you wicked wretch, come and hit me." And the boy would have come to settle her, if we had not been there to receive him; but he would not trust himself to us and lashed his horses to get out of our reach, making all haste to pass the bridge, and turning his head round towards us, for fear of being followed.

I thought at the time that cousin George was wrong in saying that this boy had a spite against the French because he was a Prussian; but I learned afterwards that he was right, and that the Germans have borne ill-will against us for years without showing it to us—like a set of sulky fellows waiting for a good opportunity to make us feel it.

"It is our *good man* that we have to thank for this," said George: "the Germans fancy that we have named him Emperor to begin his uncle's tricks again; and now they look upon our Plébiscite as a declaration of war. The joy of our sous-préfets, our mayors, and our curés, and of all those excellent people who only prosper upon the miseries of mankind, proves that they are not very far out."

"Yes, indeed," cried his wife; "but to beat a child, that is cowardly."

"Bah! don't let us think about it," said George. "We shall see much worse things than this; and that we shall have deserved it through our own folly. God grant that I may be mistaken!"

Talking so, we arrived home.

My wife had prepared dinner; there was kissing all round, the acquaintance was made; we all sat round the table, and dined with excellent appetites. Marie Anne was gay; she had already seen their house on her way, and the garden behind it with its rows of gooseberry-bushes and the plum-trees full of blossom. The two carts, the horses having been taken out, were standing before their door; and from our

windows might be seen the village people examining them attentively, going round gazing with curiosity upon the great heavy boxes, feeling the bedding, and talking together about this great quantity of furniture and goods, just as if it was their own business.

They said no doubt that our cousin George Weber and his wife were rich people, who deserved the respectful consideration of the whole country round; and I myself, before seeing these great chests, should never have dreamed that they could have so much belonging entirely to themselves.

This proved to me that my wife was perfectly right in continuing to pay every respect to my cousin; she had also cautioned our daughter Grédel; and as for Jacob, he is a most sensible lad, who thinks of everything and needs not to be told what to do.

But what astonished us a great deal more was to see arriving about half-past three two other large waggons from the direction of Wechem, and hearing my cousin cry "Here comes my wine from Barr!"

Before coming to Rothalp he had himself gone to Barr, in Alsace, to taste the wine and to make his own bargains.

"Come, Christian," said he, rising, "we have no time to lose if we mean to unload before nightfall. Take your pincers and your mallet; you will also fetch ropes and a ladder to let the casks down into the cellar."

Jacob ran to fetch what was wanted, and we all came out together—my wife, my daughter, cousin, and everybody. My man Frantz remained alone at the mill, and immediately they began to undo the boxes, to carry the furniture into the house: chests of drawers, wardrobes, bedsteads, and quantities of plates, dishes, soup-tureens, &c., which were carried straight into the kitchen.

My cousin gave his orders: "Put that down in a corner; set that in another corner."

The neighbours helped us too, out of curiosity. Everything went on admirably.

And upon this arrived the waggons from Barr; they were obliged to be kept waiting till seven o'clock. Our wives had already set up the beds and put away the linen in the wardrobes.

About seven o'clock everything was in order in the house. We now thought of resting till to-morrow, when Joseph said to us, turning up his sleeves, "Now, my friend, here comes the biggest part of the work. I always strike the iron while it's hot. Let all the men who are willing help me to unload the casks, for the drivers want to get back to town, and I think they are right."

Immediately the cellar was opened, the ladder laid against the first waggon, the lanterns lighted, the planks set leaning in their places, and until eleven o'clock we did nothing but unload wine, roll down casks, let them down with my ropes, and put them in their places.

Never had I worked as I did on that day!

Not before eleven o'clock did cousin George, seeing everything settled

to his satisfaction, seem pleased ; he tapped the first cask, filled a jug with wine, and said, "Working men, come up, we will have a good draught, and then we will go to bed."

The cellar was shut up, we drank in the large parlour, and then all, one after another, went home to bed, upon the stroke of midnight.

All the villagers were astonished to see how these Parisians worked. They were all the talk. At one time it was how cousin had bought up all the manure at the gendarmerie ; then how he had made a contract to have all his land drained in the autumn ; and then how he was going to build a stable and a laundry at the back of his house, a distillery at the end of his yard ; he was enlarging his cellars, already the finest in the country. What a quantity of money he must have !

If he had not paid his architect, the carpenters, and the masons cash down, it would have been declared that he was ruining himself. But he never wanted a penny ; and his solicitor always addressed him with a smiling face, raising his hat from afar off, and calling him "my dear Monsieur Weber."

One single thing vexed George : he had requested of the prefecture as soon as he arrived a licence to open his public-house at the sign of "The Pineapple." He had even written three letters to Sarrebourg, and had received no answer. Morning and evening, seeing me pass by with my carts of grain and flour, he called to me through the window, "Hallo, Christian, this way just a minute ! "

He never talked of anything else ; he even came to tease me at the mayoralty-house to endorse and seal his letters with attestations as to his good life and character ; and yet no answer came.

One evening, as I was busy signing the registration of the reports drawn up in the week by the schoolmaster, he came in and said, "Nothing yet ? "

"Cousin, I don't know the meaning of it."

"Very well," said he, sitting before my desk. "Give me some paper. Let me write for once, and then we will see."

He was pale with excitement, and began to write, reading it as he went on :—

"MONSIEUR LE SOUS-PRÉFET,—I have requested from you a licence to open a public-house at Rothalp. I have even had the honour of writing you three letters upon the subject, and you have given me no answer. Answer me—yes or no ! When people are paid, and well paid, they ought to fulfil their duty.

"Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, I have the honour to salute you.

"GEORGE WEBER,
"Late Sergeant of Marines."

Hearing this letter, my hair positively stood on end.

"Cousin, don't send that," said I ; "the Sous-Préfet would very likely put you under arrest."

"Pooh!" said he, "you country people, you seem to look upon these folks as if they were demigods, yet they live upon our money. It is we who pay them; they are for our service, and nothing more. Here, Christian, will you put your seal to that?"

Then, in spite of all that my wife might say, I replied, "George, for the love of Heaven, don't ask me that. I should most assuredly lose my place."

"What place? Your place as mayor," said he, "in which you receive the commands of the Sous-Préfet, who receives the commands of the Préfet, who receives the orders of a Minister, who does everything that our *honest man* bids him. I had rather be a ragman than fill such a place."

The schoolmaster, who happened to be there, suddenly dropped from the clouds; his arms hung down the sides of his chair, and he gazed at my cousin with staring eyes, just as a man fearfully examines a dangerous lunatic.

I, too, was sitting upon thorns on hearing such words as these in the mayoralty-house; but at last I told him I had rather go myself to Sarrebourg and ask for the permission than seal that letter.

"Then we will go together," said he.

But I felt sure that if he spoke after this fashion to Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, he would lay hands upon both of us; and I said that I should go alone, because his presence would put a constraint upon me.

"Very well," he said; "but you will tell me everything that the Sous-Préfet has been saying to you."

He tore up his letter, and we went out together.

I don't remember that I ever passed a worse night than that. My wife kept repeating to me that our cousin George had the precedence over the Sous-Préfet, who only laughed at us; that the Emperor, too, had cousins, who wanted to inherit everything from him, and that everybody ought to stick to their own belongings.

Next day, when I left for Sarrebourg, my head was in a whirl of confusion, and I thought that my cousin and his wife would have done well to have stayed in Paris rather than come and trouble us when we were at peace, when every man paid his own rates and taxes, when everybody voted as they liked at the prefecture. I could say that never was a loud word spoken at the public-house; that people attended with regularity both mass and vespers; that the gendarmes never visited our village more than once a week to preserve order; and that I myself was treated with consideration and respect; that when I spoke but a word, honest men said, "That's the truth! that's the opinion of Monsieur le Maire!"

Yes, all these things and many more passed through my mind, and I should have liked to see cousin George at Jericho.

This is just how we were in our village, and I don't know even yet by what means other people had made such fools of us. In the end, we have had to pay dearly for it; and our children ought to learn wisdom by it.

At Sarrebourg, I had to wait two hours before I could see Monsieur le

Sous-Préfet, who was breakfasting with messieurs the councillors of the arrondissement, in honour of the Plébiscite. Five or six mayors of the neighbourhood were waiting like myself ; we saw filing down the passage great dishes of fish and game, notwithstanding that the fishing and shooting seasons were over ; and then baskets of wine ; and we could hear our councillors laughing, " Ha ! ha ! ha ! " They were enjoying themselves mightily.

At last Monsieur le Sous-Préfet came out ; he had had an excellent breakfast.

" Ha ! is that you, gentlemen ? " said he ; " come in, come into the office."

And for another quarter of an hour we were left standing in the office. Then came Monsieur le Sous-Préfet to get rid of the mayors, who wanted different things for their villages. He looked delighted, and granted everything. At last, having despatched the rest, he said to me, " Oh ! Monsieur le Maire, I know the object of your coming. You are come to ask for the person called George Weber, authorisation to open a public-house at Rothalp. Well, it's out of the question. That George Weber is a Republican ; he has already offered opposition to the Plébiscite : you ought to have notified this to me. You have screened him because he is your cousin. Authorisations to keep public-houses are granted to steady men, devoted to his Majesty the Emperor, and who keep a watch over their customers ; but they are never granted to men who require watching themselves. You should be aware of that."

Then I perceived that my rascally deputy, that miserable Placiard, had denounced us. That old dry-bones did nothing but draw up perpetual petitions, to beg for places, pensions, tobacco excise offices, decorations for himself and his honourable family, speaking incessantly of his services, his devotion to the dynasty, and his claims. His claims were the denunciations, the informations which he laid before the Sous-Préfecture ; and, to tell the truth, in those days these were the most valid claims.

I was indignant, but I said nothing ; and I simply added a few words in favour of cousin George, assuring Monsieur le Sous-Prefet that lies had been told about him, that one should not believe everything, &c. He half concealed a weary yawn ; and as the councillors of the arrondissement were laughing in the garden, he rose and said politely, " Monsieur le Maire, you are answered. Besides, you have already two public-houses in your village ; three would be too many."

It was useless to stay after that, so I made a bow, at which he seemed pleased, and returned quietly to Rothalp. The same evening I went to repeat to George, word for word, the answer of the Sous-Préfet. Instead of getting angry, as I expected, my cousin listened calmly. His wife only cried out against that bad lot—she spoke of all the sous-préfets in the most disrespectful manner. But my cousin, smoking his pipe after supper, took it all very easily.

" Just listen to me, Christian," said he. " In the first place, I am

much obliged to you for the trouble you have taken. All that you tell me, I knew beforehand ; but I am not sorry to know it certainly. Yet I could wish that the Sous-Prefet had had my letter. As it is, since I am refused licence to sell a few glasses of wine retail, I will sell wine wholesale. I have already a stock of white wine, and no later than to-morrow I am off to Nancy. I buy a light cart and a good horse. Thence I drive to Thiancourt, where I lay in a stock of red wine. After that, I rove right and left all over the country, and I sell my wine by the cask or the quarter-cask, according to the solvency of my customers : instead of having one public-house, I will have twenty. I must keep moving. With an inn, Marie Anne would still have been obliged to cook ; she has quite enough to do without."

" Oh ! yes," she said ; " for thirty years I have been cooking dishes of sauerkraut and sausage at Krantheimer's, at Montmartre, and at Auber's, in the cloister St. Benoit."

" Exactly so," said George ; " and now you shall cook no longer, and you shall look after the crops, the stacking of the hay, the storage of fruits and potatoes. We shall get in our dividends, and I will trot round the country with my little pony from village to village. Monsieur le Sous-Prefet shall know that George Weber can live without him."

Hearing this, I learnt that they had money in the funds, besides all the rest ; and I reflected that my cousin was quite right to laugh at all the sous-préfets in the world.

He came with me to the door, shaking hands with me ; and I said to myself that it was an abomination to have refused a publican's licence to respectable persons, when they gave it to such men as Nicolas Reiter and Jean Kreps, whom their own wives called their best customers, because they dropped under the table every evening and had to be carried to bed.

On the other hand, I saw that it was better for me ; for if my cousin had been found infringing the law, I should have had to take depositions, and there would have been a quarrel with cousin. So that all was for the best, the wholesale business being only the exciseman's affair.

What George had said, he did next day. At six o'clock he was already at the station, and in five or six days he had returned from Nancy upon his own char-à-banc, drawn by a strong horse, five or six years old, in its prime. The char-à-banc was a new one ; a tilt could be put up in wet weather, which could be raised or lowered to deliver the wine or receive back the empty casks, when necessary.

The wine from Thiancourt followed. George stored it immediately, after having paid the bill and settled with the carter. I was standing by.

As for telling you how many casks he had them in the house, that would be difficult without examining his books ; but not a wine-merchant in the neighbourhood, not even in town, could boast of such a wine-vault as he had for excellence of quality, for variety in price, of red and white, of Alsace and Lorraine.

About that time, he sent for me and Jacob to make a list of safe customers. He wrote on, asking us, "How much may I give to so-and-so?"

"So much."

"How much to that man?"

"So much."

In the course of a single afternoon we had passed in review all the innkeepers and publicans from Droulingen to Quatre Vents, from Quatre Vents to the Dagsberg. Jacob and I knew what they were worth to the last penny; for the man who pays readily for his flour, pays well for his wine; and those who want pulling up by the miller, are in no hurry to open their purses to the others.

That was the way cousin George conducted his business.

He took a lad from our place, the son of the cooper Gros, to drive; and he himself was salesman.

From that day he was only seen passing through Rothalp at a quick trot, and his lad loading and unloading.

My cousin, also, had a notion of distilling in the winter. He bought up a quantity of old second-hand barrels to hold the fruits which he hoped to secure at a cheap rate in autumn; he laid up a great store of firewood. All our country people had nothing to do but to look at him to learn something; but the people down our way all think themselves so amazingly clever, and that does not help to make folks richer.

Well, it is plain to you that our cousin's prospects were looking very bright. Every day, returning from his journey to Saverne or to Phalsbourg, he would stop his cart before my door, and come to see me in the mill, crying out: "Hallo! good afternoon, Christian. How are you to-day?"

Then we used to step into the back parlour, on account of the noise and the dust, and we talked about the price of corn, cattle, provender, and everything that is interesting to people in our condition.

What astonished him most of all was the number of Germans to be met with in the mountains and in the plains.

"I see nobody else," said he; "wood-cutters, brewers' men, coopers, tinkers, photographers, contractors. I will lay a wager, Christian, that your young man Frantz is a German too."

"Yes, he comes from the Grand Duchy of Baden."

"How does this happen?" said George. "What is the meaning of it all?"

"They are good workmen," said I, "and they ask only half the wages."

"And ours—what becomes of them?"

"Ah, you see, cousin George, that is their business."

"I understand," he said, "that we are making a great mistake. Even in Paris, this crowd of Germans, crossing-sweepers, shop and warehousemen, carters, book-keepers, professors of every kind, astonished me;

and since Sadowa, there are twice as many. . The more country they annex, the further they extend their view. Where is the advantage of our being Frenchmen—paying every year heavier taxes; sending our children to be drawn for the conscription, and paying for their exemption; bearing all the expenses of the State, all the insults of the préfets, the sous-préfets, and the police-inspectors, and the annoyances of common spies and informers, if those fellows, who have nothing at all to bear, enjoy the same advantages with ourselves, and even greater ones; since our own people are sent off to make room for these, and by their great numbers they lower the price of hand-labour? This benefits the manufacturers, the contractors, the bourgeois class, but it is misery for the mass of the people. I cannot understand it at all. Our rulers, up there, must be losing their senses. If that goes on, the working-men will cease to care for their country, since it cares so little for them; and the Germans who are favoured, and who hate us, will quietly put us out at our own doors."

Thus spoke my cousin, and I knew not what answer to make.

But about this time I had a great trouble, and although this affair is my private business alone, I must tell you about it.

Since the arrival of George, my daughter Grédel, instead of looking after our business as she used to do, washing clothes, milking cows, and so on, was all the blessed day at Marie Anne's. Jacob complained, and said: "What is she about down there? By and by I shall have to prepare the clothes for the wash, and hang them upon the hedges to dry, and churn butter. Could not Grédel do her own work? Does she think we are her servants?"

He was right. But Grédel never troubled herself; she never has thought of any one besides herself. Down there she was along with George's wife, who talked to her from morning till night about Paris, the grand squares, the markets, the price of eggs and of meat, what was charged at the barrières; of this, that, and the other; cooking, and what not.

Marie Anne wanted company. But this did not suit me at all; and the less because Grédel had had a lover in the village for some time, and that, when this is the case, the best thing to be done is always to keep your daughter at home, and to watch her closely.

It was only a common clerk at a stone-quarry in Wilsberg, a late artillery sergeant, Jean Baptiste Werner, who had taken the liberty to cast his eyes upon our daughter. We had nothing to say against this young man. He was a fine, tall man, thin, with a bold expression and brown moustaches, and who did his duty very well at the quarry by Father Heitz; but he could earn no more than his three francs a day: and any one may see that the daughter of Christian Weber was not to be thrown away upon a man who earns three francs a day. No, that would never do.

Nevertheless, I had often seen this Jean Baptiste Werner going in the morning to his work with his foot-rule under his arm, stopping at

the mill-dam, as if to watch the geese and the ducks paddling about the sluice, or the hens circling around the cock on the dunghill; and at the same moment Grédel would be slowly combing her hair at her window before the little looking-glass, leaning her head outside. I had also noticed that they said good-morning to each other a good way off, and that that clerk always looked excited and flurried at the sight of my daughter; and I had even been obliged to give Grédel notice to go and comb her hair somewhere else when that man passed, or to shut her window.

This is my case, simply told.

That young man worried me. My wife, too, was on her guard.

You may now understand why I should have preferred to have seen our daughter at home; but it was not so easy to forbid her to go to my cousin's. George and his wife might have been angry! and that troubled us.

Fortunately, about that time the eldest son of Father Heitz,* the owner of the quarry, asked for Grédel in marriage.

For a long while, Monsieur Mathias Heitz, junior, had come every Sunday from Wilsberg to the *Cruchon d'Or*, to amuse himself with Jacob, as young men do when they have intentions with regard to a family. He was a fine young man, fat, with red cheeks and ears, and always well dressed, with a flowered-velvet waistcoat and seals to his watch-chain; in a word, just such a young man as a girl with any good sense would be glad to have for a husband.

He had property too; he was the eldest of five children. I reckoned that his own share might be fifteen to twenty thousand francs after the death of his parents.

Well, this young man demanded Grédel in marriage, and in a moment Jacob, my wife and myself were agreed to accept him.

Only my wife thought that we ought to consult cousin George and Marie Anne. Grédel was just there when I went in with Catherine; but behold! on the first mention of the thing she began to melt into tears, and to say she would rather die than marry Mathias Heitz. You may imagine how angry we were. My wife was going to slap her face or box her ears, but my cousin became angry now, and told us that we ought never to oblige a girl to marry against her will, because this was the way to make miserable households. Then he took us out into the passage, telling us that he took the responsibility of this affair; that he wished to obtain information, and tell the young man that he required a month for reflection.

We could not refuse him that. Grédel would no longer come home; my cousin's wife begged us not to plague her; we had to give way to them; but it was one of the greatest troubles of my life. And I thought: "Now you cannot give your daughter to whoever you like; is not this really abominable?"

* It is usual there for fathers of families to be distinguished as Father So-and-so.

I felt angry with myself for having listened to my cousin : but, nevertheless, Grédel stayed with them a whole week, in consequence of which we were obliged to hire a charwoman, and Jacob exclaimed that Grédel could not have offered him a worse insult than to refuse his best comrade, a rich fellow, who boldly paid down his money for ten, fifteen, and twenty bottles at the club without winking.

However, he never mentioned it to cousin George, for whom he felt the greatest respect on account of his expectations from him, and whose strong language dismayed him.

At last my wife found that Grédel was staying too long away from home ; the people of the village would have gone on to talking about it : so one evening I went to see George to ask him what he had learnt about Heitz's son.

It was after supper. Grédel, seeing me come in, slipped out into the kitchen, and my cousin said to me frankly : "Listen, Christian : here is the matter in two words—Grédel loves another."

"Whom?"

"Jean Baptiste Werner."

"Father Heitz's clerk! the son of the Woodward Werner, who has never had anything but potatoes to eat? Is she in love with him? Let the wretch come—let him come and ask her! I'll kick him down the stairs! And does Grédel grieve me so? Oh! I should never have believed it of her!"

I could have cried.

"Come, Christian," said my cousin, "you must be reasonable."

"Reasonable! she deserves to have her neck wrung!"

I was in a fury; I wanted to lay hold of her. Happily, she had gone into the garden, and George held me back. He obliged me to sit down again, and said : "What is Mathias Heitz? a fat fool who knows nothing but how to play at cards and drink. He was put to college at Phalsbourg, at M. Verrot's, like all the other respectable young men in the district; but he now drives about in a char-à-banc in a flowered waistcoat and jingling seals; he could not possibly earn a couple of pence—and the old man would like to be rid of him by marrying him. I have obtained information about him. He may come in for from fifteen to twenty thousand francs some day; but what are fifteen thousand francs for an ass? He will eat them, he will drink them—perhaps he has already swallowed half—and if there is a family, what are fifteen or even twenty thousand francs between five or six children? Formerly, when girls used to have an outfit for a marriage portion, and the eldest son succeeded his father, things went on pretty well. It did not want much talent to carry on a well-established business, or to follow up a trade from father to son. But at the present day, mother-wit and good sense stand in the foremost ranks. Grandfather Heitz was an industrious man; he made money: but Father Mathias has never added a sou to his property, and the son has not a grain of good sense."

"But the other fellow—why he has nothing at all."

"The other, Jean Baptiste Werner, is a good man, who has done his duty by Father Heitz; it is he who knows everything, who manages everything, who takes in orders, makes all the arrangements for the carriage of stone by carts or by railway. Heitz puts the money into his pocket, and Werner has all the work, for want of a little capital to set himself up in business. He has seen foreign service. I have seen his certificates of character in Africa, in Mexico. They are excellent. If I were in your place, I would give Grédel to him."

"Never!" cried I, thumping upon the table; "I had rather drown her."

Half the wine-glasses were shattered on the floor; but my cousin was not angry.

"Well, Christian," said he, "you are wrong. Think of it. Grédel will remain here. I will answer for her. You must not take her away at present. You would be quite capable of ill-treating her, and then you would repent of it."

"Let her stay as long as you like!" said I, taking up my hat; "let her never darken my doors again." And I rushed out.

Never in my life had I been so angry and so grieved. At home I did not even dare to say what I had learnt; but Jacob suspected it, and one day, as Werner was stopping in front of the mill, he shook his pitchfork at him, shouting: "Come on!" But he pretended not to hear him, and went on his way.

I was at last, however, obliged to tell my wife the whole matter. At first she was near fainting; but she soon recovered, and said to me: "Well, if Grédel won't have young Mathias, we shall keep our hundred louis, and we shall have no need to hire a new servant. I should prefer that, for one cannot trust strange servants in a house."

"Yes; but how can we declare to Mathias Heitz that Grédel refuses his son?"

"Oh, don't trouble yourself, Christian," said she; "leave me alone, and don't let us quarrel with cousin George, that's the principal thing. I will say that Grédel is too young to be married; that is the proper thing to say, and nobody can answer that."

Catherine quieted me in this way; but this business was still racking my brain, when extraordinary things came to pass, which we were far from expecting, and which were to turn our hair grey, and that of many others with us.

III.

One morning the secretary of the Sous-Préfet wrote to me to come to Sarrebourg. From time to time we used to receive orders, as magistrates, to go and give an account at the sous-préfecture of what was going on in our district.

I said to myself, immediately on receiving this letter from Secretary Gérard, that it was something about our Agricultural Society, which had not yet delivered the prizes gained by the ducks and the geese a few weeks before.

It was true that the Paris newspapers had for three days past been discussing a Prince of Hohenzollern, who had just been named King of Spain ; but what could that signify to us at Rothalp, Illingen, Droulingen, and Henridorf, whether the King of Spain was called Hohenzollern or by any other name ?

In my opinion, it could not be about that affair that Monsieur le Sous-Préfet wanted to talk to us, but about the old or a new Agricultural Society, or something at least which concerned us in particular. The idea of the parish road and the bells came also into my mind : perhaps that was the object we were sent for.

At last I took up my staff and started for Sarrebourg.

Arriving there, I found the whole length of the principal street crowded with mayors, police-inspectors, and *juges-de-paix*.^{*} Mother Adler's inn and all the little public-houses were so full that they could not have held another.

Then I said to myself, no doubt something quite new is in the wind : as, for instance, a fête like that when her Majesty the Empress and the Prince Imperial, three years before, passed through Nancy to celebrate the union of Lorraine with France. Thereupon I went to the sous-préfecture, where I found already several mayors of the neighbourhood talking at the door. They were discussing the price of corn, the dearness of cattle food ; they were called in one after another.

In half an hour my turn came ; Monsieur Christian Weber's name was called, and I entered with my hat in my hand.

Monsieur le Sous-Préfet and his secretary Gérard, with his pen stuck behind his ear, were seated there : the secretary began to mend his pen ; and Monsieur le Sous-Préfet asked me what was going on in my part of the country ?

" In our country, Monsieur le Sous-Préfet ? why, nothing at all. There is a great drought ; no rain has fallen for six weeks ; the potatoes are very small and . . . "

" I don't mean that, Monsieur le Maire ; what do they think of the Prince Hohenzollern and the Crown of Spain ? "

On hearing this I scratched my head, saying to myself, " What will you answer to that now ? What must you say ? "

Then Monsieur le Sous-Préfet asked me :—" What is the spirit of your population ? "

The spirit of our population ? How could I get out of that ?

" You see, Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, in our villages the people are no scholars ; they don't read the papers."

" But tell me, what do they think of the war ? "

* Magistrates.

"What war?"

"If, now, we should have war with Germany, would those people be satisfied?"

Then I began to catch a glimpse of his meaning, and I said: "You know, Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, that we have voted in the Plébiscite to have peace, because everybody likes trade and business and quietness at home; we only want to have work and . . ."

"Of course, of course, that is plain enough, we all want peace; H. M. the Emperor, H. M. the Empress, and everybody love peace! But if we are attacked, if Count Bismarck and the King of Prussia attack us?"

"Then, Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, we shall be obliged to defend ourselves in the best way we can; by all sorts of means, with pitchforks, with sticks . . ."

"Put that down, Monsieur Gérard, write down those words. You are right, Monsieur le Maire: I felt sure of you beforehand," said Monsieur le Sous-Préfet, shaking hands with me: "you are a worthy man."

Tears came into my eyes. He came with me to the door, saying:—"The determination of your people is admirable; tell them so; tell them that we wish for peace; that our only thought is for peace; that his Majesty and their excellencies the Ministers want nothing but peace; but that France cannot endure the insults of an ambitious power. Communicate your own ardour to the village of Rothalp. Good, very good. *Au revoir*, Monsieur le Maire, farewell."

Then I went out, much astonished; another mayor took my place, and I thought, "What! does that Bismarck mean to attack us! Oh, the villain!"

But as yet I could tell neither why nor how.

I repaired to Mother Adler's, where I ordered bread and cheese and a bottle of white wine, according to custom, before returning home; and there I heard all those gentlemen, the Government officials, the controllers, the tax-collectors, the judges, the receivers, &c., assembled in the public room, telling one another that the Prussians were going to invade us; that they had already taken half of Germany, and that they were wanting now to lay the Spaniards upon our back in order to take the rest; just as they had put Italy upon the back of the Austrians before Sadowa.

All the mayors present were of the same opinion; they had all answered that they would defend themselves, if we were attacked; for the Lorrainers and the Alsacians have never been behindhand in defending themselves. All the world knows that.

I went on listening; at last, having paid my bill, I started to return home.

I was out of Sarrebourg, and had walked for half-an-hour in the dust, reflecting upon what had just taken place, when I heard a conveyance coming at a rapid rate behind me. I turned round. It was cousin George upon his char-à-banc, at which I was much pleased.

"Is that you, cousin?" said he, pulling up.

"Yes; I am just come from Sarrebourg, and I am not sorry to meet with you, for it is terribly warm."

"Well, up with you," said he. "You have had a great gathering to-day; I saw all the public-houses full."

I was up; I took my seat, and the conveyance went off again at a trot.

"Yes," said I; "it is a strange business; you would never guess why we have been sent for to the sous-préfecture."

"What for?"

Then I told him all about it; much excited against the villain Bismarck, who wanted to invade us and had just invented this Hohenzollern to drive us to extremities.

George listened. At last he said: "My poor Christian! the Sous-Prefet was quite right in calling you a worthy fellow; and all those other mayors that I saw down there, with their red noses, are worthy men; but do you know my opinion upon all those matters?"

"What do you think, George?"

"Well, my belief is, that they are leading you like a string of asses by the bridle. That Sous-Prefet will present his report to the Prefet, the Prefet to the Minister of the Interior, Monsieur Chevandier de Valdrôme the organizer of the Plébiscite—he who told you to vote 'Yes' to have peace—and that Minister will present his report to the Emperor. They all know that the Emperor desires war, because he needs it for his dynasty."

"What! he wants war?"

"No doubt he does. In spite of all, forty-five thousand soldiers have voted against the Plébiscite. The army is turning round against the dynasty. There is no more promotion: medals, crosses, promotions were distributed in profusion at first, now all that has stopped; the inferior officers have no more hope of passing into the higher ranks, because the army is filled with nobles, with Jesuits from the schools of the Sacred College; in the Court calendars nothing is seen but *de's*. The soldiers who spring from the people begin to discern that they are being gradually extinguished. They are not in a pleasant temper. But war may put everything straight again: a few battles are wanted to throw light upon the malcontents; there must be a victory to crush the Republicans, for the Republicans are gaining confidence: they are lifting up their heads. After a victory, a few thousand of them can be sent to Lambessa and to Cayenne, just as after the Second of December. At the same time, the Jesuits will be placed at the head of the schools, as they were under Charles X., the Pope will be restored, Italy and Germany will be dismembered, and the dynasty will be placed on a strong foundation for twenty years. Every twenty years they will begin again, and the dynasty will send down deep roots. But war there must be."

"But what do you mean? It is Bismarck who is beginning it," said I; "it is he who is picking a German quarrel."

"Bismarck," replied my cousin, "is well acquainted with everything that is going on, and so are the very lowest workmen in Paris; but you, you know nothing at all. Your only talk is about potatoes and cabbages; your thoughts never go beyond this. You are kept in ignorance. You are, as it were, the dung of the Empire—the manure to fatten the dynasty. Bismarck is aware that our *honest man* wants war to temper his army afresh, and shut the mouths of those whose talk is of economy, liberty, honour, and justice; he knows that never will Prussia be so strong again as she is now—she already covers three-fourths of Germany; all the Germans will march at her side to fight against France; they can put more than a million of men in the field in fifteen days, and they will be three or four against one; with such odds there is no need of genius, the war will go forward of itself—one is sure of crushing the enemy."

"But the Emperor must know that as well as you, George," said I; "therefore he will be for peace."

"No, he is relying upon his mitrailleuses: and then he wants his dynasty—and what does the rest matter to him? To establish his dynasty he took an oath before God and man to the Republic, and then he trampled upon his oath and the Republic; he brought destruction upon thousands of good men, who were defending the laws against him; he has enriched thousands of thieves who uphold him; he has corrupted our youth by the evil example of the prosperity of brigands, and the misfortunes of the well-disposed; he has brought low everything that was worthy of respect, he has exalted everything which calls for disgust and contempt. All the men who have approached this pestilence have been contaminated to the very marrow of their bones. You, Christian, you evidently cannot comprehend these abominable things; but the worst rogues in this country, the wildest vagabonds among your peasants, could never form an opinion of the villainy of this *honest man*; they are saints compared with him; at the very sight of him the heart of a true Frenchman rises within him; for the sake of his dynasty he would sell and sacrifice us all to the last man."

George, in uttering these words, was trembling with excitement; I saw that he was convinced to the bottom of his heart of what he said. Fortunately we were alone on the road, far from any village; no one could hear us.

"But that Hohenzollern," I said, after a few minutes' silence, "that Leopold Hohenzollern—is not he the cause of all that is going on?"

"No," said George; "if misfortunes come upon us, the *honest man* alone will be the cause of it. If you did but read a newspaper, you would see that the Spaniards wanted for their king, Montpensier, a son of Louis Philippe; that could only have turned out to our good; Montpensier would naturally have become the ally of France, but that was against the interests of the dynasty; the *honest man* threatened Spain: then the Spaniards nominated this Prussian prince in the place of Montpensier, a prince who could not stand alone, and whom a million of Germans would

support if necessary. They fixed upon him to annoy our gentleman : of course they had no need to ask for his advice. Did France consult any one ? did she trouble herself about England, Spain, or Germany, when she proclaimed the Republic, or when she proclaimed Louis Bonaparte Emperor ? Has he then a right to thrust his nose into their affairs ? No —it is unpleasant for us, but the Spaniards were right ; there was no need for them to put themselves out to please our *worthy man* and his fine family. And now—happen what may—I look no longer for peace ; the Germans are withdrawing from our country in all directions—they are joining their regiments ; the order has been given, and they obey : it is a bad sign. In all the villages that I have been passing through, and upon every road, I have seen these fine fellows, their bundles over their shoulders—they are off home ! ”

Thus spoke cousin George to me. I thought this was a little too bad ; but, on arriving home, the first thing my wife said to me was, “ Do you know that Frantz is going ? ”

“ Our young man ? ”

“ Yes, he wants his wages.”

“ Ah, indeed. Let him come here at the back, and we will have a talk.”

I was much surprised : and I made him enter into my room at the bottom of the mill, where I keep my papers and my books. His cow-skin pack was already fastened upon his shoulder.

“ Are you going away, Frantz ? Have you anything to complain of ? ”

“ No, nothing at all, Monsieur Weber. I am obliged to go ; for I have received orders to join my regiment.”

“ Are you a soldier, then ? ”

“ Yes, in the landwehr. We are all soldiers in Germany.”

“ But if you liked to stay here, who would come and fetch you ? ”

“ That is an impossibility, M. Weber. I should be declared a deserter. I could never return home again. They would take away all my property present and to come ; my brothers and sisters would come in for it.”

“ Ah, that is a different thing ! Now I understand. There—there's your certificate of character.”

I had written a good certificate for him, for he was a good workman. I paid him what I owed him to the last farthing and wished him a prosperous journey.

Cousin George was right : those Germans were all moving homewards. You would never have thought there were so many in the country : some had passed themselves off for Swiss, some for Luxemburgers ; others had quite settled down, and no one would ever have suspected that they owed two or three more years' service to their country. This gave rise to disputes. Those whose situations they had taken, and who bore ill-will against them, fell upon them ; the *gendarmerie* beat up the mountains : things were taking an ugly turn.

It was in vain that I affirmed at the mayoralty-house that the Emperor breathed only peace ; as the *Gazettes* of the préfecture talked of nothing

but the insults we had had to endure, the ambition of Prussia, revenge for Sadowa, the Catholic nations who were going to declare *en masse* in our favour, and all the powers which maintained the justice of our cause, the enthusiasm for war grew higher and higher day by day ; especially that of the pedlars, the tinkers, the small dealers, and all those good fellows who come out of the prisons, and who are continually seeking for work without finding any ; but they do find walls to get over, doors to break in, cupboards to plunder. All these excellent people declared that it was for the honour of France to make war upon Germany.

And then the Paris newspapers in the pay of the Government, as we have more recently learnt, continued arriving and circulating gratis, saying that our ambassador Benedetti had gone to see Frederick William at the Waters of Ems, to entreat him not to precipitate us into the horrors of war, that he had answered that all that was nothing to him, that his cousin Leopold of Hohenzollern had only consulted him out of respect as the head of the family ; that he was too good a relation to advise him not to accept so good a windfall, which was coming down to him out of the clouds.

Then, indeed, did the indignation of the *Gazettes* burst upon the Germans. They must, by all means, be brought to their senses ! Now, fancy the position of a mayor, who only two months before had made all his village vote in the Plébiscite, promising them peace, and who saw clearly at last how they had only made use of him as a tool to dupe his people. I dared no longer look my cousin in the face, for he had warned me of the thing ; and now I knew what to think of the honourable members of the Government.

Affairs were going on so badly that war seemed imminent, when one fine morning we learnt that Hohenzollern had waived his right to be King of Spain. Ah ! now we were out of the mess ; now we could breathe more freely. That day my cousin himself was smiling ; he came to the mill and said to me : “The Emperor and his ministers, his préfets and sous-préfets have not such long noses after all ! How well things were going on too ! And now they will be obliged to wait for another opportunity to begin. How they must feel sold ! ”

We both laughed with delight.

More than twenty-five of the principal inhabitants came that day to shake hands with me at the mayoralty-house. It was concluded that his excellency, Monsieur Emile Ollivier, would never be able to tinker this war again, and that peace would be preserved in spite of him, in spite of the Emperor, in spite of Marshal Lebœuf, who had declared to the Senate that *we were ready—five times ready, and that during the whole campaign we should never be short of so much as a garter button.*

Hohenzollern was praised up to the skies for having shown good sense for everybody ; and as the reserves had been called out, many young men were glad to be able to remain in the bosom of their families.

In a word, it was concluded that the whole affair was at an end ; when

our *good man* and his honourable Minister informed us that we had begun to rejoice too soon. All at once, the report ran that Frederick William had shown our ambassador the door, saying something so terribly strong against the honour of his Majesty Napoleon III., that nobody dared repeat it. It appears that his Majesty the Emperor, seeing that the King of Prussia had withdrawn his authorisation from the Prince of Hohenzollern to accept the crown of Spain, had not been satisfied with that; and that he had given orders to his ambassador to demand, furthermore, his renunciation of any crown whatever that the Spaniards might offer him in all time to come—for himself or his family; and that this King, who does not enjoy at all times the best of tempers, had said something very strong touching *our honest man*.

That day I was at the mayoralty-house about eleven o'clock. I had just celebrated the marriage of André Fix with Haan's daughter, and the wedding-party had started for church, when the postman Michel comes in and throws down the little *Moniteur* upon the table. Then I sat down to read about the great battle in the Legislative Chambers, fought by Thiers, Gambetta, Jules Favre, Glais-Bizoin, and others, against the Ministers, in defence of peace.

It was magnificent. But this had not prevented the majority, appointed to do everything, from declaring war against the Germans, on account of what the King of Prussia had said.

What could he then have said? His excellency Emile Ollivier has never dared to repeat it! My cousin George declared that he had said something that was right, and naturally very unpleasant; but it is known now by the reports of our ambassador that the King of Prussia had said *nothing at all*, and that the indignation of M. Ollivier was nothing but a disgraceful sham to deceive the Chambers, and make them vote for war.

Well, this is the commencement of our calamities; and, for my part, I find that this did not furnish a cheerful prospect. No! After having endured such miseries, it is not pleasant to remember that we owe them all to M. Emile Ollivier, to Monsieur Lebeuf, to Monsieur Bonaparte, and to other men of that stamp, who are living at this moment comfortably in their country-houses in Italy, in Switzerland, in England, whilst so many unhappy creatures have had their lives sacrificed, have been utterly ruined, have lost father, children, and friends, and we Alsacians and Lorrainers more than all that—our own Fatherland!

A Persian Passion Play.

EVERYBODY has this last autumn been either seeing the Ammergau Passion Play or hearing about it ; and to find any one who has seen it and not been deeply interested and moved by it, is very rare. The peasants of the neighbouring country, the great and fashionable world, the ordinary tourist, were all at Ammergau, and were all delighted ; but what is said to have been especially remarkable was the affluence there of ministers of religion of all kinds. That Catholic peasants, whose religion has accustomed them to show and spectacle, should be attracted by an admirable scenic representation of the great moments in the history of their religion, was natural ; that tourists and the fashionable world should be attracted by what was at once the fashion and a new sensation of a powerful sort, was natural ; that many of the ecclesiastics there present should be attracted there, was natural too. Roman Catholic priests mustered strong, of course. The Protestantism of a great number of the Anglican clergy is supposed to be but languid, and Anglican ministers at Ammergau were sympathisers to be expected. But Protestant ministers of the most unimpeachable sort, Protestant Dissenting ministers, were there, too, and showing favour and sympathy ; and this, to any one who remembers the almost universal feeling of Protestant Dissenters in this country, not many years ago, towards Rome and her religion,—the sheer abhorrence of Papists and all their practices,—could not but be striking. It agrees with what is seen also in literature, in the writings of Dissenters of the younger and more progressive sort, who show a disposition for regarding the Church of Rome historically rather than polemically, a wish to do justice to the undoubted grandeur of certain institutions and men produced by that Church, quite novel, and quite alien to the simple belief of earlier times, that between Protestants and Rome there was a measureless gulph fixed. Something of this may, no doubt, be due to that keen eye for Nonconformist business in which our great bodies of Protestant Dissenters, to do them justice, are never wanting ; to a perception that the case against the Church of England may be yet further improved by contrasting her with the genuine article in her own ecclesiastical line, by pointing out that she is neither one thing nor the other to much purpose, by dilating on the magnitude, reach, and impressiveness, on the great place in history, of her rival, as compared with anything she can herself pretend to. Something of this there is, no doubt, in some of the modern Protestant sympathy for things Catholic ; but in general that sympathy springs, in Churchmen and Dissenters alike, from another and a better cause,—from the spread of larger conceptions of religion, of man, and of history, than were current

formerly. We have seen lately in the newspapers, that a clergyman, who in a popular lecture gave an account of the Passion Play at Ammergau, and enlarged on its impressiveness, was admonished by certain remonstrants, who told him it was his business, instead of occupying himself with these sensuous shows, to learn to walk by faith, not by sight, and to teach his fellow-men to do the same. But this severity seems to have excited wonder rather than praise ; so far had those wider notions about religion and about the range of our interest in religion, of which I have just spoken, conducted us. To this interest I propose to appeal in what I am going to relate. For the Passion Play at Ammergau, with its immense audiences, the seriousness of its actors, the passionate emotion of its spectators, brought to my mind something of which I had read an account lately ; something produced, not in Bavaria nor in Christendom at all, but far away in that wonderful East, from which, whatever airs of superiority Europe may justly give itself, all our religion has come, and where religion, of some sort or other, has still an empire over men's feelings such as it has nowhere else. This product of the remote East I wish to exhibit while the remembrance of what has been seen at Ammergau is still fresh ; and we will see whether that bringing together of strangers and enemies who once seemed to be as far as the poles asunder, which Ammergau in such a remarkable way effected, does not hold good and find a parallel even in Persia.

Count Gobineau, formerly Minister of France at Teheran and at Athens, published, a few years ago, an interesting book on the present state of religion and philosophy in Central Asia. He is favourably known also by his studies in ethnology. His accomplishments and intelligence deserve all respect, and in his book on religion and philosophy in Central Asia he has the great advantage of writing about things which he has followed with his own observation and inquiry in the countries where they happened. The chief purpose of his book is to give a history of the career of Mirza Ali Mahomed, a Persian religious reformer, the original *Báb*, and the founder of *Bábism*, of which most people in England have at least heard the name. *Báb* means *gate*, the door or gate of life ; and in the ferment which now works in the Mahometan East, Mirza Ali Mahomed,—who seems to have been made acquainted by Protestant missionaries with our Scriptures and by the Jews of Shiraz with Jewish traditions, to have studied, besides, the religion of the Ghebers, the old national religion of Persia, and to have made a sort of amalgam of the whole with Mahometanism,—presented himself, about five-and-twenty years ago, as *the door*, the gate of life ; found disciples, sent forth writings, and finally became the cause of disturbances which led to his being executed, on the 19th of July, 1849, in the citadel of Tabriz. The *Báb* and his doctrines are a theme on which much might be said ; but I pass them by, except for one incident in the *Báb*'s life, which I will notice. Like all religious Mahometans, he made the pilgrimage to Mecca ; and his meditations at that centre of his religion first suggested his mission to him. But soon

after his return to Bagdad he made another pilgrimage ; and it was in this pilgrimage that his mission became clear to him, and that his life was fixed. "He desired"—I will give an abridgment of Count Gobineau's own words—"to complete his impressions by going to Kufa, that he might visit the ruined mosque where Ali was assassinated, and where the place of his murder is still shown. He passed several days there in meditation. The place appears to have made a great impression on him ; he was entering on a course which might and must lead to some such catastrophe as had happened on the very spot where he stood, and where his mind's eye showed him the Imam Ali lying at his feet, with his body pierced and bleeding. His followers say that he then passed through a sort of moral agony which put an end to all the hesitations of the natural man within him. It is certain that when he arrived at Shiraz, on his return, he was a changed man. No doubts troubled him any more : he was penetrated and persuaded ; his part was taken."

This Ali also, at whose tomb the Báb went through the spiritual crisis here recorded, is a familiar name to most of us. In general our knowledge of the East goes but a very little way ; yet almost every one has at least heard the name of Ali, the Lion of God, Mahomet's young cousin, and the first who, after his wife, believed in him, and who was declared by Mahomet in his gratitude his brother, delegate, and vicar. Ali was one of Mahomet's best and most successful captains ; he married Fatima, the daughter of the Prophet ; his sons, Hassan and Hussein, were, as children, favourites with Mahomet, who had no son of his own to succeed him, and was expected to name Ali as his successor. He named no successor. At his death Ali was passed over, and the first caliph, or *vicar* and *lieutenant* of Mahomet in the government of the state, was Abu-Bekr ; only the spiritual inheritance of Mahomet, the dignity of Imam, or *Primate*, devolved by right on Ali and his children. Ali, lion of God as in war he was, held aloof from politics and political intrigue, loved retirement and prayer, was the most pious and disinterested of men. At Abu-Bekr's death he was again passed over in favour of Omar. Omar was succeeded by Othman, and still Ali remained tranquil. Othman was assassinated, and then Ali, chiefly to prevent disturbance and bloodshed, accepted the caliphate. Meanwhile, the Mahometan armies had conquered Persia, Syria, and Egypt ; the Governor of Syria, Moawiyah, an able and ambitious man, set himself up as caliph, his title was recognized by Amrou, the Governor of Egypt, and a bloody and indecisive battle was fought in Mesopotamia between Ali's army and Moawiyah's. Gibbon shall tell the rest :—"In the temple of Mecca three Charegites or enthusiasts discoursed of the disorders of the church and state ; they soon agreed that the deaths of Ali, of Moawiyah, and of his friend Amrou, the Viceroy of Egypt, would restore the peace and unity of religion. Each of the assassins chose his victim, poisoned his dagger, devoted his life, and secretly repaired to the scene of action. Their resolution was equally desperate ; but the first mistook the person of Amrou, and stabbed the deputy who occupied his seat ; the prince of

Damascus was dangerously hurt by the second ; Ali, the lawful caliph, in the mosque of Kufa, received a mortal wound from the hand of the third."

The events through which we have thus rapidly run ought to be kept in mind, for they are the elements of Mahometan history : any right understanding of the state of the Mahometan world is impossible without them. For that world is divided into the two great sects of Shias and Sunis ; the Shias are those who reject the first three caliphs as usurpers, and begin with Ali as the first lawful successor of Mahomet ; the Sunis recognize Abu-Bekr, Omar, and Othman, as well as Ali, and regard the Shias as impious heretics. The Persians are Shias, and the Arabs and Turks are Sunis. Hussein, one of Ali's two sons, married a Persian princess, the daughter of Yezdejerd the last of the Sassanian kings, the king whom the Mahometan conquest of Persia expelled ; and Persia, through this marriage, became specially connected with the house of Ali. "In the fourth age of the Hegira," says Gibbon, "a tomb, a temple, a city, arose near the ruins of Kufa. Many thousands of the Shias repose in holy ground at the feet of the vicar of God ; and the desert is vivified by the numerous and annual visits of the Persians, who esteem their devotion not less meritorious than the pilgrimage of Mecca."

But, to comprehend what I am going to relate from Count Gobineau, we must push our researches into Mahometan history a little further than the assassination of Ali. Moawiyah died in the year 680 of our era, nearly fifty years after the death of Mahomet. His son Yezid succeeded him on the throne of the caliphs at Damascus. During the reign of Moawiyah Ali's two sons, the Imams Hassan and Hussein, lived with their families in religious retirement at Medina, where their grandfather Mahomet was buried. In them the character of abstention and renouncement, which we have noticed in Ali himself, was marked yet more strongly ; but, when Moawiyah died, the people of Kufa, the city on the lower Euphrates where Ali had been assassinated, sent offers to make Hussein caliph if he would come among them, and to support him against the Syrian troops of Yezid. Hussein seems to have thought himself bound to accept the proposal. He left Medina, and, with his family and relations, to the number of about eighty persons, set out on his way to Kufa. Then ensued the tragedy so familiar to every Mahometan, and to us so little known, the tragedy of Kerbela. "O death," cries the bandit-minstrel of Persia, Kurroglou, in his last song before his execution, "O death, whom didst thou spare ? Were even Hassan and Hussein, those footstools of the throne of God on the seventh heaven, spared by thee ? No ! thou madest them martyrs at Kerbela."

We cannot do better than again have recourse to Gibbon's history for an account of this famous tragedy. "Hussein traversed the desert of Arabia with a timorous retinue of women and children ; but, as he approached the confines of Irak, he was alarmed by the solitary or hostile face of the country, and suspected either the defection or the ruin of his party. His fears were just ; Obeidallah, the governor of Kufa, had

extinguished the first sparks of an insurrection ; and Hussein, in the plain of Kerbela, was encompassed by a body of 5,000 horse, who intercepted his communication with the city and the river. In a conference with the chief of the enemy he proposed the option of three conditions—that he should be allowed to return to Medina, or be stationed in a frontier garrison against the Turks, or safely conducted to the presence of Yezid. But the commands of the caliph or his lieutenant were stern and absolute, and Hussein was informed that he must either submit as a captive and a criminal to the Commander of the Faithful, or expect the consequences of his rebellion. ‘Do you think,’ replied he, ‘to terrify me with death?’ And during the short respite of a night he prepared, with calm and solemn resignation, to encounter his fate. He checked the lamentations of his sister Fatima, who deplored the impending ruin of his house. ‘Our trust,’ said Hussein, ‘is in God alone. All things, both in heaven and earth, must perish and return to their Creator. My brother, my father, my mother, were better than I, and every Mussulman has an example in the Prophet.’ He pressed his friends to consult their safety by a timely flight ; they unanimously refused to desert or survive their beloved master, and their courage was fortified by a fervent prayer and the assurance of paradise. On the morning of the fatal day he mounted on horseback, with his sword in one hand and the Koran in the other ; the flanks and rear of his party were secured by the tent-ropes and by a deep trench, which they had filled with lighted fagots, according to the practice of the Arabs. The enemy advanced with reluctance ; and one of their chiefs deserted, with thirty followers, to claim the partnership of inevitable death. In every close onset or single combat the despair of the Fatimites was invincible ; but the surrounding multitudes galled them from a distance with a cloud of arrows, and the horses and men were successively slain. A truce was allowed on both sides for the hour of prayer ; and the battle at length expired by the death of the last of the companions of Hussein.”

The details of Hussein’s own death will come better presently ; suffice it at this moment to say he was slain, and that the women and children of his family were taken in chains to the Caliph Yezid at Damascus. Gibbon concludes the story thus : “In a distant age and climate, the tragic scene of the death of Hussein will awaken the sympathy of the coldest reader. On the annual festival of his martyrdom, in the devout pilgrimage to his sepulchre, his Persian votaries abandon their souls to the religious phrenzy of sorrow and indignation.”

Thus the tombs of Ali and of his son, the Meshed Ali and the Meshed Hussein, standing some thirty miles apart from one another in the plain of the Euphrates, had, when Gibbon wrote, their yearly pilgrims and their tribute of enthusiastic mourning. But Count Gobineau relates, in his book of which I have spoken, a development of these solemnities which was unknown to Gibbon. Within the present century there has arisen, on the basis of this story of the martyrs of Kerbela, a drama, a Persian national drama, which Count Gobineau, who has seen and heard it, is bold enough

to rank with the Greek drama as a great and serious affair, engaging the heart and life of the people who have given birth to it ; while the Latin, English, French, and German drama is, he says, in comparison a mere pastime or amusement, more or less intellectual and elegant. To me it seems that the Persian *tazyas*—for so these pieces are called—find a better parallel in the Ammergau Passion Play than in the Greek drama. They turn entirely on one subject—the sufferings of the *Family of the Tent*, as the Imam Hussein and the company of persons gathered around him at Kerbela are called. The subject is sometimes introduced by a prologue, which may perhaps one day, as the need of variety is more felt, become a piece by itself; but at present the prologue leads invariably to the martyrs. For instance, the Emperor Tamerlane, in his conquering progress through the world, arrives at Damascus ; the keys of the city are brought to him by the governor ; but the governor is a descendant of one of the murderers of the Imam Hussein ; Tamerlane is informed of it, loads him with reproaches, and drives him from his presence. The emperor presently sees the governor's daughter splendidly dressed, thinks of the sufferings of the holy women of the Family of the Tent, and upbraids and drives her away as he did her father. But after this he is haunted by the great tragedy which has been thus brought to his mind, and he cannot sleep and cannot be comforted ; he calls his vizier, and his vizier tells him that the only way to soothe his troubled spirit is to see a *tazya*. And so the *tazya* commences. Or, again (and this will show how strangely, in the religious world which is now occupying us, what is most familiar to us is blended with that of which we know nothing) : Joseph and his brethren appear on the stage, and the old Bible story is transacted. Joseph is thrown into the pit and sold to the merchants, and his blood-stained coat is carried by his brothers to Jacob ; Jacob is then left alone, weeping and bewailing himself ; the angel Gabriel enters, and reprobates him for his want of faith and constancy, telling him that what he suffers is not a hundredth part of what Ali, Hussein, and the children of Hussein will one day suffer. Jacob seems to doubt it ; Gabriel, to convince him, orders the angels to perform a *tazya* of what will one day happen at Kerbela. And so the *tazya* commences.

These pieces are given in the first ten days of the month of Moharrem, the anniversary of the martyrdom at Kerbela. They are so popular that they now invade other seasons of the year also ; but this is the season when the world is given up to them. King and people, every one is in mourning ; and at night and while the *tazyas* are not going on, processions keep passing, the air resounds with the beating of breasts and with litanies of “ O Hassan ! Hussein ! ” while the Seyids,—a kind of popular friars claiming to be descendants of Mahomet, and in whose incessant popularising and amplifying of the legend of Kerbela in their homilies during pilgrimages and at the tombs of the martyrs, the *tazyas*, no doubt, had their origin,—keep up by their sermons and hymns the enthusiasm which the drama of the day has excited. It seems as if no one went to bed ; and certainly no

one who went to bed could sleep. Confraternities go in procession with a black flag and torches, every man with his shirt torn open, and beating himself with the right hand on the left shoulder in a kind of measured cadence to accompany a canticle in honour of the martyrs. These processions come and take post in the theatres where the Seyids are preaching. Still more noisy are the companies of dancers, striking a kind of wooden castanets together, at one time in front of their breasts, at another time behind their heads, and marking time with music and dance to a dirge set up by the bystanders, in which the names of the Imams perpetually recur as a burden. Noisiest of all are the Berbers, men of a darker skin and another race, their feet and the upper part of their body naked, who carry, some of them tambourines and cymbals, others iron chains and long needles. One of their race is said to have formerly derided the Imams in their affliction, and the Berbers now appear in expiation of that crime. At first their music and their march proceed slowly together, but presently the music quickens, the chain and needle-bearing Berbers move violently round, and begin to beat themselves with their chains and to prick their arms and cheeks with the needles—first gently, then with more vehemence; till suddenly the music ceases, and all stops. So we are carried back, on this old Asiatic soil, where beliefs and usages are heaped layer upon layer and ruin upon ruin, far past the martyred Imams, past Mahometanism, past Christianity, to the priests of Baal gashing themselves with knives and to the worship of Adon.

The *tekyas*, or theatres for the drama which calls forth these celebrations, are constantly multiplying. The king, the great functionaries, the towns, wealthy citizens like the king's goldsmith, or any private person who has the means and the desire, provide them. Every one sends contributions; it is a religious act to furnish a box or to give decorations for a *tekyā*; and as religious offerings, all gifts down to the very smallest are accepted. There are *tekyas* for not more than three or four hundred spectators, and there are *tekyas* for three or four thousand. At Ispahan there are representations which bring together more than twenty thousand people. At Teheran, the Persian capital, each quarter of the town has its *tekyas*, every square and open place is turned to account for establishing them, and spaces have been expressly cleared, besides, for fresh *tekyas*. Count Gobineau describes particularly one of these theatres,—a *tekyā* of the best class, to hold an audience of about four thousand,—at Teheran. The arrangements are very simple; the *tekyā* is a walled parallelogram, with a brick platform, *sakou*, in the centre of it; this *sakou* is surrounded with black poles at some distance from each other, the poles are joined at the top by horizontal rods of the same colour, and from these rods hang coloured lamps, which are lighted for the praying and preaching at night when the representation is over. The *sakou*, or central platform, makes the stage; in connection with it, at one of the opposite extremities of the parallelogram lengthwise, is a reserved box, *tdgnumá*, higher than the *sakou*; this box is splendidly decorated,

and is used for peculiarly interesting and magnificent tableaux,—the court of the Caliph, for example,—which occur in the course of the piece. A passage of a few feet wide is left free between the stage and this box; all the rest of the space is for the spectators, of whom the foremost rows are sitting on their heels close up to this passage, so that they help the actors to mount and descend the high steps of the *tâgnumâ* when they have to pass between that and the *sakou*. On each side of the *tâgnumâ* are boxes, and along one wall of the enclosure are other boxes with fronts of elaborate woodwork, which are left to stand as a permanent part of the construction; facing these, with the floor and stage between, rise tiers of seats as in an amphitheatre. All places are free; the great people have generally provided and furnished the boxes, and take care to fill them; but if a box is not occupied when the performance begins, any ragged street-urchin or beggar may walk in and seat himself there. A row of gigantic masts runs across the middle of the space, one or two of them being fixed in the *sakou* itself; and from these masts is stretched an immense awning which protects the whole audience. Up to a certain height these masts are hung with tiger and panther skins, to indicate the violent character of the scenes to be represented. Shields of steel and of hippopotamus skin, and flags and naked swords, are also attached to these masts. A sea of colour and splendour meets the eye all round. Woodwork and brickwork disappear under cushions, rich carpets, silk hangings, India muslin embroidered with silver and gold, shawls from Kerman and from Cashmere; there are lamps, lustres of coloured crystal, mirrors, Bohemian and Venetian glass, porcelain vases of all degrees of magnitude from China and from Europe, paintings and engravings, displayed in profusion everywhere; the taste may not always be soberly correct, but the whole spectacle has just the effect of prodigality, colour, and sumptuousness which we are accustomed to associate with the splendours of the Arabian Nights.

In marked contrast with this display is the poverty of scenic contrivance and stage illusion. The subject is far too interesting and too solemn to need them; the actors are visible on all sides, and the exits, entrances, and stage-play of our theatres are impossible; the imagination of the spectator fills up all gaps and meets all requirements. On the Ammergau arrangements one feels that the archaeologists and artists of Munich have laid their correct finger; at Teheran there has been no schooling of this sort. A copper basin of water represents the Euphrates; a heap of chopped straw in a corner is the sand of the desert of Kerbela, and the actor goes and takes up a handful of it, when his part is about to require him to throw, in Oriental fashion, dust upon his head. There is no attempt at proper costume; all that is sought is, to do honour to the personages of chief interest by dresses and jewels which would pass for rich and handsome things to wear in modern Persian life. The power of the actors is in their genuine sense of the seriousness of the business they are engaged in. They are, like the public around them, penetrated with this, and so the actor throws his whole soul into what he is about, the public

meets the actor halfway, and effects of extraordinary impressiveness are the result. "The actor is under a charm," says Count Gobineau; "he is under it so strongly and completely that almost always one sees Yezid himself (the usurping caliph), the wretched Ibn-Said (Yezid's general), the infamous Shemer (Ibn-Said's lieutenant), at the moment they vent the crudest insults against the Imams whom they are going to massacre, or against the women of the Imam's family whom they are ill-using, burst into tears and repeat their part with sobs. The public is neither surprised nor displeased at this; on the contrary, it beats its breast at the sight, throws up its arms towards heaven with invocations of God, and redoubles its groans. So it often happens that the actor identifies himself with the personage he represents to such a degree that, when the situation carries him away, he cannot be said to act, he *is* with such truth, such complete enthusiasm, such utter self-forgetfulness, what he represents, that he reaches a reality at one time sublime, at another terrible, and produces impressions on his audience which it would be simply absurd to look for from our more artificial performances. There is nothing stilted, nothing false, nothing conventional; nature, and the facts represented, themselves speak."

The actors are men and boys, the parts of angels and women being filled by boys; but the children who appear in the piece are often the children of the principal families of Teheran; their appearance in this religious solemnity (for such it is thought) being supposed to bring a blessing upon them and their parents. "Nothing is more touching," says Count Gobineau, "than to see these little things of three or four years old, dressed in black gauze frocks with large sleeves, and having on their heads small round black caps embroidered with silver and gold, kneeling beside the body of the actor who represents the martyr of the day, embracing him, and, with their little hands, covering themselves with chopped straw for sand, in sign of grief. These children evidently," he continues, "do not consider themselves to be acting; they are full of the feeling that what they are about is something of deep seriousness and importance; and though they are too young to comprehend fully the story, they know, in general, that it is a matter sad and solemn. They are not distracted by the audience, and they are not shy, but go through their prescribed part with the utmost attention and seriousness, always crossing their arms respectfully to receive the blessing of the Imam Hussein; the public beholds them with emotions of the liveliest satisfaction and sympathy."

The dramatic pieces themselves are without any author's name. They are in popular language, such as the commonest and most ignorant of the Persian people can understand, free from learned Arabic words,—free, comparatively speaking, from Oriental fantasticality and hyperbole. The Seyids, or popular friars, already spoken of, have probably had a hand in the composition of many of them. The Moolahs, or regular ecclesiastical authorities, condemn the whole thing. It is an innovation which they disapprove and think dangerous; it is addressed to the eye, and their

religion forbids to represent religious things to the eye ; it departs from the limits of what is revealed and appointed to be taught as the truth, and brings in novelties and heresies ;—for these dramas keep growing under the pressure of the actor's imagination and emotion, and of the imagination and emotion of the public, and receive new developments every day. The learned, again, say that these pieces are a heap of lies, the production of ignorant people, and have no words strong enough to express their contempt for them. Still, so irresistible is the vogue of these sacred dramas that, from the king on the throne to the beggar in the street, every one, except perhaps the Moollahs, attends them, and is carried away by them. The Imams and their family speak always in a kind of lyrical chant, said to have rhythmical effects, often, of great pathos and beauty ; their persecutors, the villains of the piece, speak always in prose.

The stage is under the direction of a choragus, called *oostad*, or "master," who is a sacred personage by reason of the functions which he performs. Sometimes he addresses to the audience a commentary on what is passing before them, and asks their compassion and tears for the martyrs ; sometimes, in default of a Seyid, he prays and preaches. He is always listened to with veneration, for it is he who arranges the whole sacred spectacle which so deeply moves everybody. With no attempt at concealment, with the book of the piece in his hand, he remains constantly on the stage, gives the actors their cue, puts the children and any inexperienced actor in their right places, dresses the martyr in his winding-sheet when he is going to his death, holds the stirrup for him to mount his horse, and inserts a supply of chopped straw into the hands of those who are about to want it. Let us now see him at work.

The theatre is filled, and the heat is great ; young men of rank, the king's pages, officers of the army, smart functionaries of State, move through the crowd with water-skins slung on their backs, dealing out water all round, in memory of the thirst which on these solemn days the Imams suffered in the sands of Kerbela. Wild chants and litanies, such as we have already described, are from time to time set up by a dervish, a soldier, a workman in the crowd. These chants are taken up, more or less, by the audience ; sometimes they flag and die away for want of support, sometimes they are continued till they reach a paroxysm, and then abruptly stop. Presently a strange, insignificant figure in a green cotton garment, looking like a petty tradesman of one of the Teheran bazaars, mounts upon the *sakou*. He beckons with his hand to the audience, who are silent directly, and addresses them in a tone of lecture and exhortation, thus :—

" Well, you seem happy enough, Mussulmans, sitting there at your ease under the awning ; and you imagine Paradise already wide open to you. Do you know what Paradise is ? It is a garden, doubtless, but such a garden as you have no idea of. You will say to me : ' Friend, tell us what it is like.' I have never been there, certainly ; but plenty of prophets have described it, and angels have brought news of it. However, all I will tell you is, that there is room for all good people there, for it is

330,000 cubits long. If you do not believe, inquire. As for getting to be one of the good people, let me tell you it is not enough to read the Koran of the Prophet (the salvation and blessing of God be upon him !); it is not enough to do everything which this divine book enjoins; it is not enough to come and weep at the *tazyas*, as you do every day, you sons of dogs you, who know nothing which is of any use; it behoves, besides, that your good works (if you ever do any, which I greatly doubt) should be done in the name and for the love of Hussein. It is Hussein, Mussulmans, who is the door to Paradise; it is Hussein, Mussulmans, who upholds the world; it is Hussein, Mussulmans, by whom comes salvation! Cry, Hassan, Hussein!"

And all the multitude cry: "O Hassan! O Hussein!"

"That is well; and now cry again." And again all cry: "O Hassan! O Hussein!" "And now," the strange speaker goes on, "pray to God to keep you continually in the love of Hussein. Come, make your cry to God." Then the multitude, as one man, throw up their arms into the air, and with a deep and long-drawn cry exclaim: "Ya Allah! O God!"

Fifes, drums, and trumpets break out; the *kervas*, great copper trumpets five or six feet long, give notice that the actors are ready and that the *tazya* is to commence. The preacher descends from the *sakou*, and the actors occupy it.

To give a clear notion of the cycle which these dramas fill, we should begin, as on the first day of the Moharrem the actors begin, with some piece relating to the childhood of the Imams, such as, for instance, the piece called *The Children Digging*. Ali and Fatima are living at Medina with their little sons Hassan and Hussein; the simple home and occupations of the pious family are exhibited; it is morning; Fatima is seated with the little Hussein on her lap, dressing him. She combs his hair, talking carelessly to him all the while. A hair comes out with the comb; the child starts; Fatima is in distress at having given the child even this momentary uneasiness, and stops to gaze upon him tenderly. She falls into an anxious reverie, thinking of her fondness for the child and of the unknown future in store for him. While she muses, the angel Gabriel stands before her. He reproves her weakness: "A hair falls from the child's head," he says, "and you weep; what would you do if you knew the destiny that awaits him, the countless wounds with which that body shall one day be pierced, the agony that shall rend thine own soul!" Fatima, in despair, is comforted by her husband Ali, and they go together into the town to hear Mahomet preach. The boys and some of their little friends begin to play; every one makes a great deal of Hussein; he is at once the most spirited and the most amiable child of them all. The party amuse themselves with digging, with making holes in the ground and building mounds. Ali returns from the sermon and asks what they are about; and Hussein is made to reply in ambiguous and prophetic answers, which convey that by these holes and mounds in the earth are prefigured interments and tombs. Ali departs again; there rush in a number of big and fierce boys, and begin to pelt the little Imams with stones. A companion

shields Hussein with his own body, but he is struck down with a stone, and with another stone Hussein, too, is stretched on the ground senseless. Who are these boy-tyrants and persecutors? They are Ibn-Said, and Shemer, and others, the future murderers at Kerbela. The audience perceive it with a shudder; the hateful assailants go off in triumph; Ali re-enters, picks up the stunned and wounded children, brings them round, and takes Hussein back to his mother Fatima.

But let us now come at once to the days of martyrdom and to Kerbela. One of the most famous pieces of the cycle is a piece called the *Marriage of Kassem*, which brings us into the very middle of these crowning days. Count Gobineau has given a translation of it, and from this translation we will take a few extracts. Kassem is the son of Hussein's elder brother, the Imam Hassan, who had been poisoned by Yezid's instigation at Medina. Kassem and his mother are with the Imam Hussein at Kerbela; there, too, are the women and children of the holy family, Omm-Leyla, Hussein's wife, the Persian princess, the last child of Yezdejerd the last of the Sassanides; Zeyneb, Hussein's sister, the offspring, like himself, of Ali and Fatima, and the granddaughter of Mahomet; his nephew Abdallah, still a little child; finally, his beautiful daughter Zobeyda. When the piece begins, the Imam's camp in the desert has already been cut off from the Euphrates and besieged several days by the Syrian troops under Ibn-Said and Shemer, and by the treacherous men of Kufa. The Family of the Tent were suffering torments of thirst; one of the children had brought an empty water-bottle, and thrown it, a silent token of distress, before the feet of Abbas, the uncle of Hussein; Abbas had sallied out to cut his way to the river, and had been slain. Afterwards Ali-Akber, Hussein's eldest son, had made the same attempt and met with the same fate. Two younger brothers of Ali-Akber followed his example, and were likewise slain. The Imam Hussein had rushed amidst the enemy, beaten them from the body of Ali-Akber, and brought the body back to his tent; but the river was still inaccessible. At this point the action of the *Marriage of Kassem* begins. Kassem, a youth of sixteen, is burning to go out and avenge his cousin. At one end of the *sakou* is the Imam Hussein seated on his throne; in the middle are grouped all the members of his family; at the other end lies the body of Ali-Akber, with his mother Omm-Leyla, clothed and veiled in black, bending over it. The *kernas* sound, and Kassem, after a solemn appeal from Hussein and his sister Zeyneb to God and to the founders of their house to look upon their great distress, rises and speaks to himself:—

Kassem. "Separate thyself from the women of the harem, Kassem. Consider within thyself for a little; here thou sittest, and presently thou wilt see the body of Hussein, that body like a flower, torn by arrows and lances like thorns, Kassem.

"Thou sawest Ali-Akber's head severed from his body on the field of battle, and yet thou livedst!

"Arise, obey that which is written of thee by thy father; to be slain, that is thy lot, Kassem!"

"Go, get leave from the son of Fatima, most honourable among women, and submit thyself to thy fate, Kassem."

Hussein sees him approach. "Alas," he says, "it is the orphan nightingale of the garden of Hassan, my brother!" Then Kassem speaks:—

Kassem. "O God, what shall I do beneath this load of affliction? My eyes are wet with tears, my lips are dried up with thirst. To live is worse than to die. What shall I do, seeing what hath befallen Ali-Akber? If Hussein suffereth me not to go out, O misery! For then what shall I do, O God, in the day of the resurrection, when I see my father Hassan? When I see my mother in the day of the resurrection, what shall I do, O God, in my sorrow and shame before her? All my kinsmen are gone to appear before the Prophet: shall not I also one day stand before the Prophet; and what shall I do, O God, in that day!"

Then he addresses the Imam:—

"Hail, threshold of the honour and majesty on high, threshold of heaven, threshold of God! In the roll of martyrs thou art the chief; in the book of creation thy story will live for ever. An orphan, a fatherless child, downcast and weeping, comes to prefer a request to thee."

Hussein bids him tell it, and he answers:—

"O light of the eyes of Mahomet the mighty, O lieutenant of Ali the lion, Abbas has perished, Ali-Akber has suffered martyrdom; O my uncle, thou hast no warriors left, and no standard-bearer. The roses are gone and gone are their buds; the jessamine is gone, the poppies are gone. I alone, I am still left in the garden of the Faith, a thorn, and miserable. If thou hast any kindness for the orphan, suffer me to go forth and fight."

Hussein refuses. "My child," he says, "thou wast the light of the eyes of the Imam Hassan, thou art my beloved remembrance of him; ask me not this; urge me not, entreat me not; to have lost Ali Akber is enough."

Kassem answers:—"That Kassem should live and Ali-Akber be martyred—sooner let the earth cover me! O king, be generous to the beggar at thy gate. See how my eyes run with tears and my lips are dried up with thirst. Cast thine eyes toward the waters of the heavenly Euphrates! I die of thirst; grant me, O thou marked of God, a full pitcher of the water of life; it flows in the Paradise which awaits me."

Hussein still refuses; Kassem breaks forth in complaints and lamentations, his mother comes to him and learns the reason. She then says:—

"Complain not against the Imam, light of my eyes; only by his order can the commission of martyrdom be given. In that commission are sealed two-and-seventy witnesses, all righteous, and among the two-and-seventy is thy name. Know that thy destiny of death is commanded in the writing which thou wearest on thine arm."

This writing is the testament of his father Hassan. He bears it in triumph to the Imam Hussein, who finds written there that he should, on the death-plain of Kerbela, suffer Kassem to have his will, but that he should marry him first to his daughter Zobeyda. Kassem consents, though in astonishment. "Consider," he says, "there lies Ali-Akber, mangled

by the enemies' hands! Under this sky of ebon blackness, how can joy show her face? Nevertheless if thou commandest it, what have I to do but obey? Thy commandment is that of the Prophet, and his voice is that of God." But Hussein has also to overcome the reluctance of the intended bride and of all the women of his family.

"Heir of the vicar of God," says Kassem's mother to the Imam, "bid me die, but speak not to me of a bridal. If Zobeyda is to be a bride and Kassem a bridegroom, where is the henna to tinge their hands, where is the bridal chamber?" "Mother of Kassem," answers the Imam solemnly, "yet a few moments, and in this field of anguish the tomb shall be for marriage-bed, and the winding-sheet for bridal garment!" All give way to the will of their sacred Head. The women and children surround Kassem, sprinkle him with rose-water, hang bracelets and necklaces on him, and scatter bon-bons around; and then the marriage procession is formed. Suddenly drums and trumpets are heard, and the Syrian troops appear. Ibn-Said and Shemer are at their head. "The Prince of the Faith celebrates a marriage in the desert," they exclaim tauntingly; "we will soon change his festivity into mourning." They pass by, and Kassem takes leave of his bride. "God keep thee, my bride," he says, embracing her, "for I must forsake thee!" "One moment," she says, "remain in thy place one moment! thy countenance is as the lamp which giveth us light; suffer me to turn around thee as the butterfly turneth, gently, gently!" And making a turn around him, she performs the ancient Eastern rite of respect from a new-married wife to her husband. Troubled, he rises to go: "The reins of my will are slipping away from me!" he murmurs. She lays hold of his robe: "Take off thy hand," he cries, "we belong not to ourselves!"

Then he asks the Imam to array him in his winding-sheet. "O nightingale of the divine orchard of martyrdom," says Hussein, as he complies with his wish, "I clothe thee with thy winding-sheet, I kiss thy face; there is no fear, and no hope, but of God!" Kassem commits his little brother Abdallah to the Imam's care; Omm-Leyla looks up from her son's corpse, and says to Kassem: "When thou enterest the garden of Paradise, kiss for me the head of Ali-Akber!"

The Syrian troops again appear; Kassem rushes upon them and they all go off fighting. The Family of the Tent, at Hussein's command, put the Koran on their heads and pray, covering themselves with sand. Kassem re-appears victorious; he has slain Azrek, a chief captain of the Syrians, but his thirst is intolerable. "Uncle," he says to the Imam, who asks him what reward he wishes for his valour, "my tongue cleaves to the roof of my mouth; the reward I wish is water." "Thou coverest me with shame, Kassem," his uncle answers; "what can I do? Thou askest water; there is no water!"

Kassem. "If I might but wet my mouth, I could presently make an end of the men of Kufa."

Hussein. "As I live, I have not one drop of water!"

Kassem. "Were it but lawful, I would wet my mouth with my own blood."

Hussein. "Beloved child, what the Prophet forbids, that cannot I make lawful."

Kassem. "I beseech thee, let my lips be but once moistened, and I will vanquish thine enemies!"

Hussein presses his own lips to those of Kassem, who, refreshed, again rushes forth, and returns bleeding and stuck with darts, to die at the Imam's feet in the tent. So ends the marriage of Kassem.

But the great day is the tenth day of the Moharrem, when comes the death of the Imam himself. The narrative of Gibbon well sums up the events of this great tenth day. "The battle at length expired by the death of the last of the companions of Hussein. Alone, weary, and wounded, he seated himself at the door of his tent. He was pierced in the mouth with a dart. He lifted his hands to heaven—they were full of blood—and he uttered a funeral prayer for the living and the dead. In a transport of despair, his sister issued from the tent, and adjured the general of the Kufians that he would not suffer Hussein to be murdered before his eyes. A tear trickled down the soldier's venerable beard; and the boldest of his men fell back on every side as the dying Imam threw himself among them. The remorseless Shemer—a name detested by the faithful—reproached their cowardice; and the grandson of Mahomet was slain with three-and-thirty strokes of lances and swords. After they had trampled on his body, they carried his head to the castle of Kufa, and the inhuman Obeidallah (the governor) struck him on the mouth with a cane. 'Alas!' exclaimed an aged Mussulman, 'on those lips have I seen the lips of the Apostle of God!'"

For this catastrophe no one *tazya* suffices; all the companies of actors unite in a vast open space; booths and tents are pitched round the outside circle for the spectators; in the centre is the Imam's camp, and the day ends with its conflagration.

Nor are there wanting pieces which carry on the story beyond the death of Hussein. One which produces an extraordinary effect is *The Christian Damsel*. The carnage is over, the enemy are gone; to the awe-struck beholders, the scene shows the silent plain of Kerbela and the tombs of the martyrs. Their bodies, full of wounds, and with weapons sticking in them still, are exposed to view; but around them all are crowns of burning candles, circles of light, to show that they have entered into glory. At one end of the *sakou* is a high tomb by itself; it is the tomb of the Imam Hussein, and his pierced body is seen stretched out upon it. A brilliant caravan enters, with camels, soldiers, servants, and a young lady on horseback, in European costume, or what passes in Persia for European costume. She halts near the tombs, and proposes to encamp. Her servants try to pitch a tent; but wherever they drive a pole into the ground, blood springs up, and a groan of horror bursts from the audience. Then the fair traveller, instead of encamping, mounts into the *tágnumá*, lies down to rest there, and falls asleep. Jesus Christ appears to her, and makes known that this is Kerbela, and what has happened here. Meanwhile, an Arab of the desert, a Bedouin who had formerly received Hussein's bounty, comes

stealthily, intent on plunder, upon the *sakou*. He finds nothing, and in a paroxysm of brutal fury he begins to ill-treat the corpses. Blood flows. The feeling of Asiatics about their dead is well known, and the horror of the audience rises to its height. Presently the ruffian assails and wounds the corpse of the Imam himself, over whom white doves are hovering; the voice of Hussein, deep and mournful, calls from his tomb: "*There is no God but God!*" The robber flies in terror; the angels, the prophets, Mahomet, Jesus Christ, Moses, the Imams, the holy women, all come upon the *sakou*, press round Hussein, load him with honours. The Christian damsel wakes, and embraces Islam, the Islam of the sect of the Shiahs.

Another piece closes the whole story, by bringing the captive women and children of the Imam's family to Damascus, to the presence of the Caliph Yezid. It is in this piece that there comes the magnificent tableau, of which I have already spoken, of the court of the caliph; the crown jewels are lent for it, and the dresses of the ladies of Yezid's court, represented by boys chosen for their good looks, are said to be worth thousands and thousands of pounds; but the audience see them without favour, for this brilliant court of Yezid is cruel to the captives of Kerbela. The captives are thrust into a wretched dungeon under the palace walls; but the Caliph's wife had formerly been a slave of Mahomet's daughter Fatima, the mother of Hussein and Zeyneb. She goes to see Zeyneb in prison, her heart is touched, she passes into an agony of repentance, returns to her husband, upbraids him with his crimes, and intercedes for the women of the holy family, and for the children, who keep calling for the Imam Hussein. Yezid orders his wife to be put to death, and sends the head of Hussein to the children. Sekyna, the Imam's youngest daughter, a child of four years old, takes the beloved head in her arms, kisses it, and lies down beside it. Then Hussein appears to her as in life: "Oh! my father," she cries, "where wast thou? I was hungry, I was cold, I was beaten—where wast thou?" But now she sees him again, and is happy. In the vision of her happiness she passes away out of life, she enters into rest, and the piece ends with her mother and her aunts burying her.

These are the martyrs of Kerbela; and these are the sufferings which awaken in an Asiatic audience sympathy so deep and serious, transports so genuine of pity, love, and gratitude, that to match them at all one must take the feelings raised at Ammergau. And now, where are we to look, in the subject-matter of the Persian passion-play, for the source of all this emotion? Count Gobineau suggests that it is to be found in the feeling of patriotism; and that our Indo-European kinsmen, the Persians, conquered by the Semitic Arabians, find in the sufferings of Hussein a portrait of their own martyrdom. "Hussein," says Count Gobineau, "is not only the son of Ali, he is the husband of a princess of the blood of the Persian kings; he, his father Ali, the whole body of Imams taken together, represent the nation, represent Persia, invaded, ill-treated, despoiled, stripped of its inhabitants, by the Arabians. The right which is insulted and violated in Hussein, is identified with the right of Persia. The

Arabians, the Turks, the Afghans—Persia's implacable and hereditary enemies—recognize Yezid as legitimate caliph; Persia finds therein an excuse for hating them the more, and identifies herself the more with the usurper's victims. It is *patriotism*, therefore, which has taken the form, here, of the drama to express itself." No doubt there is much truth in what Count Gobineau thus says; and it is certain that the division of Shias and Sunis has its true cause in a division of races, rather than in a difference of religious belief.

But I confess that if the interest of the Persian passion-plays had seemed to me to lie solely in the curious evidence they afford of the workings of patriotic feeling in a conquered people, I should hardly have occupied myself with them at all this length. I believe that they point to something much more interesting. What this is, I cannot do more than just indicate; but indicate it I will, in conclusion, and then leave the student of human nature to follow it out for himself.

When Mahomet's cousin Jaffer, and others of his first converts, persecuted by the idolaters of Mecca, fled in the year of our era 615, seven years before the Hegira, into Abyssinia, and took refuge with the king of that country, the people of Mecca sent after the fugitives to demand that they should be given up to them. Abyssinia was then already Christian. The king asked Jaffer and his companions what was this new religion for which they had left their country. Jaffer answered: "We were plunged in the darkness of ignorance, we were worshippers of idols. Given over to all our passions, we knew no law but that of the strongest, when God raised up among us a man of our own race, of noble descent, and long held in esteem by us for his virtues. This apostle called us to believe in one God, to worship God only, to reject the superstitions of our fathers, to despise divinities of wood and stone. He commanded us to eschew wickedness, to be truthful in speech, faithful to our engagements, kind and helpful to our relations and neighbours. He bade us respect the chastity of women, and not to rob the orphan. He exhorted us to prayer, alms-giving, and fasting. We believed in his mission, and we accepted the doctrines and the rule of life which he brought to us from God. For this our countrymen have persecuted us; and now they want to make us return to their idolatry." The king of Abyssinia refused to surrender the fugitives, and then, turning again to Jaffer, after a few more explanations, he picked up a straw from the ground, and said to him: "Between your religion and ours there is not the thickness of this straw difference."

That is not quite so; yet thus much we may affirm, that Jaffer's account of the religion of Mahomet is a great deal truer than the accounts of it which are commonly current amongst us. Indeed, for the credit of humanity, as more than a hundred millions of men are said to profess the Mahometan religion, one is glad to think so. To popular opinion everywhere, religion is proved by miracles. All religions but a man's own are utterly false and vain; the authors of them are mere impostors; and the wonders which are said to attest them, fictitious. We forget that this is a game which two can play at; although the believer of each religion always

imagines the prodigies which attest his own religion to be fenced by a guard granted to them alone. Yet how much more safe is it, as well as more fruitful, to look for the main confirmation of a religion in its intrinsic correspondence with urgent wants of human nature, in its profound necessity! Differing religions will then be found to have much in common; but this will be an additional proof of the value of that religion which does most for that which is thus commonly recognized as salutary and necessary. In Christendom one need not go about to establish that the religion of the Hebrews is a better religion than the religion of the Arabs, or that the Bible is a greater book than the Koran. The Bible *grew*, the Koran *was made*; there lies the immense difference in depth and truth between them! This very inferiority may make the Koran, for certain purposes and for people at a low stage of mental growth, a more powerful instrument than the Bible. From the circumstances of its origin, the Koran has the intensely dogmatic character, it has the perpetual insistence on the motive of future rewards and punishments, the palpable exhibition of paradise and hell, which the Bible has not. Therefore, to get the sort of power which all this gives, popular Christianity is apt to treat the Bible as if it was just like the Koran; and because of this sort of power, among the little known and little advanced races of the great African continent, the Mahometan missionaries are said to be much more successful than ours. Nevertheless even in Africa it will assuredly one day be manifest, that whereas the Bible-people trace themselves to Abraham through Isaac, and the Koran-people trace themselves to Abraham through Ishmael, the difference between the religion of the Bible and the religion of the Koran is almost as the difference between Isaac and Ishmael. I mean, that the seriousness about righteousness, which is what the hatred of idolatry really means, and the profound and inexhaustible doctrines that the righteous Eternal loveth righteousness, that there is no peace for the wicked, that the righteous is an everlasting foundation, are exhibited and inculcated in the Old Testament with an authority, majesty, and truth which leave the Koran immeasurably behind, and which, the more mankind grows and gains light, the more will be felt to have no fellows. Mahomet was no doubt acquainted with the Jews and their documents, and gained something from this source for his religion; but his religion is not a mere plagiarism from Judea, any more than it is a mere mass of falsehood. No; in the seriousness, elevation, and moral energy of himself and of that Semitic race from which he sprang and to which he spoke, Mahomet mainly found that scorn and hatred of idolatry, that sense of the worth and truth of righteousness, judgment, and justice, which make the real greatness of him and his Koran, and which are thus rather an independent testimony to the essential doctrines of the Old Testament, than a plagiarism from them. The world needs righteousness and the Bible is the grand teacher of it; but, for certain times and certain men, Mahomet too, in his way, was a teacher of righteousness.

But we know how the Old Testament conception of righteousness

ceased with time to have the freshness and force of an intuition, became something petrified, narrow, and formal, and needed renewing. We know how Christianity renewed it, carrying into these hard waters of Judaism a sort of warm gulf-stream of tender emotion, due chiefly to qualities which may be summed up as those of inwardness, mildness, and self-renouncement. Mahometanism had no such renewing; it began with a conception of righteousness, lofty indeed, but narrow, and which we may call old Jewish; and there it remained; it is not a *feeling* religion. No one would say that the virtues of gentleness, mildness, and self-sacrifice were its virtues; and the more it went on, the more the faults of its original narrow basis became visible, more and more it became fierce and militant, less and less was it amiable. Now, what are Ali, and Hassan, and Hussein and the Imams, but an insurrection of noble and pious natures against this hardness and aridity of the religion round them; an insurrection making its authors seem weak, helpless, and unsuccessful to the world and amidst the struggles of the world, but enabling them to know the joy and peace for which the world thirsts in vain, and inspiring in the heart of mankind an irresistible sympathy. "The twelve Imams," says Gibbon, "Ali, Hassan, Hussein, and the lineal descendants of Hussein to the ninth generation, without arms, or treasures, or subjects, successively enjoyed the veneration of the people. Their names were often the pretence of sedition and civil war; but these royal saints despised the pomp of the world, submitted to the will of God and the injustice of man, and devoted their innocent lives to the study and practice of religion."

Abnegation and mildness, based on the depth of the inner life, and visited by unmerited misfortune, made the power of the first and famous Imams, Ali, Hassan, and Hussein, over the popular imagination. "O brother," said Hassan, as he was dying of poison, to Hussein who sought to find out and punish his murderer, "O brother, let him alone till he and I meet together before God!" So his father Ali had stood back from his rights instead of snatching at them; so of Hussein it was said by his successful rival, the usurping Caliph Yezid: "God loved Hussein, but he would not suffer him to attain to anything." They might attain to nothing, they were too pure, these great ones of the world as by birth they were; but the people, which itself also can attain to so little, loved them all the better on that account, loved them for their abnegation and mildness, felt that they were dear to God, that God loved them, and that they and their lives filled a void in the severe religion of Mahomet. These saintly self-deniers, these resigned sufferers, who would not strive nor cry, supplied a tender and pathetic side in Islam; the conquered Persians, a more mobile, more impressionable, and gentler race than their concentrated, narrow, and austere Semitic conquerors, felt the need of it most, and gave most prominence to the ideals which satisfied the need; but in Arabs and Turks also, and in all the Mahometan world, Ali and his sons excite enthusiasm and affection. Round the central sufferer, Hussein, has come to group itself everything which is most

tender and touching ; his person brings to the Mussulman's mind the most human side of Mahomet himself, his fondness for children,—for Mahomet had loved to nurse the little Hussein on his knee, and to show him from the pulpit to his people. The Family of the Tent is full of women and children, and their devotion and sufferings,—blameless and saintly women, lovely and innocent children ; there, too, are the beauty and the love of youth ; all follow the attraction of the pure and resigned Imam, all die for him ; their tender pathos flows into his and enhances it, till there arises for the popular imagination an immense ideal of mildness and self-sacrifice, melting and overpowering the soul.

Even for us, to whom almost all the names are strange, whose interest in the places and persons is faint, who have them before us for a moment to-day, to see them again, probably, no more for ever,—even for us, unless I err greatly, the power and pathos of this ideal are recognizable. What must they be for those to whom every name is familiar and calls up the most solemn and cherished associations ; who have had their adoring gaze fixed all their lives upon this exemplar of self-denial and gentleness, and who have no other ? If it was superfluous to say to English people that the religion of the Koran has not the value of the religion of the Old Testament, still more is it superfluous to say that the religion of the Imams has not the value of Christianity. The character and discourse of Christ possess, I have often elsewhere said, two signal powers : mildness and sweet reasonableness. The latter, the power which so puts before our view duty of every kind as to give it the force of an intuition, as to make it seem,—to make the total sacrifice of our ordinary self seem, —the most simple, natural, winning, necessary thing in the world, has been hitherto applied with but a very limited range, it is destined to an infinitely wider application, and has a fruitfulness which may yet transform the world. Of this the Imams have nothing, except so far as all mildness and self-sacrifice have in them something of sweet reasonableness and are its indispensable preliminary. This they have, *mildness and self-sacrifice* ; and we have seen what an attraction it exercises. Could we ask for a stronger testimony to Christianity ? Could we wish for any sign more convincing, that Christ was indeed, what Christians call him, *the desire of all nations* ? So salutary, so necessary is what Christianity contains, that a religion—a great, powerful, successful religion—arises without it, and the missing virtue forces its way in ! Christianity may say to these Persian Mahometans, with their gaze fondly turned towards the martyred Imams, what in our Bible God says by Isaiah to Cyrus, their great ancestor:—" *I girded thee, though thou hast not known me.*" It is a long way from Kerbela to Calvary ; but the sufferers of Kerbela hold aloft to the eyes of millions of our race the lesson so loved by the sufferer of Calvary. For he said: "Learn of me, that I am *mild, and lowly of heart* ; and ye shall find *rest unto your souls.*"

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

“Collegers v. Oppidans:”

A REMINISCENCE OF ETON LIFE.

I.

At that time, when the school, not having yet swollen to its present bulky proportions, contained only six hundred and fifty fellows, and Harrow, its arch-rival, something like half that number ; when the new school-buildings on the Slough road were not yet dreamed of, and both fourth form and lower school attended service in the College Chapel like their superiors in the other divisions ; when the College Chapel itself was a cold and bleak sanctuary, with but three or four stained-glass windows and no brass candelabra ; and when the College dining-hall, yet bleaker than the Chapel, had no stained-glass windows at all, no tesselated pavement, no polished wainscot, yawning fireplace, gilt scutcheons or stately portraits ; when, instead of the Bucks constabulary who now patrol its streets day and night, there limped solitary old Tom Bott, in his light-blue livery, with the Eton arms on his left sleeve and the Waterloo medal on his breast ; and when, in a word, Eton was not quite the place it is now, nor yet so different but that present Etonians may easily imagine what manner of a spot it was ;—then, in those days, when Dr. Goodford ruled over the upper school, and Mr. Coleridge over the lower, and when Spankie, the tart-man, still sold his wares opposite Mrs. Drury's boarding-house—I, the present writer, was sent to Eton, and became, after the usual fortnight's grace, the fag of Asheton, a fellow in the eight in the upper division of the fifth form, and captain of my tutor's house.

I think it better to premise, however, that this tale is not destined to commemorate adventures of my own, but those of a fellow-fag called Jickling—Jickling, who had already been at the school a year when I arrived there, and was by common consent accounted the most idle, unkempt, incapable, and, in a general way, the least promising among the six hundred and fifty of us. It is a painful thing to say, but nobody esteemed Jickling. His house-fellows were ashamed of him, and regarded him as a black sheep in their small, eminently tidy fold ; our tutor viewed him with a cool and careful eye. If it had been put to anybody in the school whom it would have been the least desirable fellow to mess with, hold a “lock-up” * with, or indeed be intimately associated with in any way, the answer would have been “Jickling ;” and this impression was more than doubled by the cynicism, not to say effrontery, with which Jick-

* Lock-up (*subaud.*) boat. The lock-up boat is a private skiff chartered for the boating-season at a cost of 5*l.* It is distinguished from the “chance boat” in that the

ling bore off his shortcomings. For of shame at his own unworthiness Jickling possessed none. Thus I had not been five minutes in his company on the night of my arrival, before he informed me—not a little to my consternation, when I understood what he meant—that he expected to be “swished” on the very next morning for having, in the train down from Paddington, blown a mouthful of peas into the face of an engine-driver, and been “nailed” in the act by a master who had got into the carriage next his at Ealing; and this communication was quite of a piece with Jickling’s habitual confidences respecting himself. He was continually playing a part in those short but painful interviews with the head master that are conducted in the presence of the sixth-form præpostor and two “holders down;” and nobody would have ventured to assert that he came out from these interviews otherwise than hardened in spirit—however it might be in person—and steadfastly minded to be peccant again as soon as he had the opportunity. He was one of those unfortunate boys who seem pre-doomed to go wrong. Though provided with good clothes enough, his dress was always shabby and ill-matched, the trousers of one suit doing duty with the waistcoat of another; and though he was supplied with money sufficient, and more than sufficient, for all his needs, yet he never had a sixpence, and was always in debt. Desperate passages of arms would take place between him and the Spankie already mentioned, as he endeavoured to glide unobserved past that worthy at school-hours, and not only with Spankie, but with all the other tart-men, Spankie’s colleagues, who lined the low wall which bisects the College part of High Street and forms a bulwark to the school-yard. No sooner, indeed, did Jickling heave in sight, with his necktie all awry, his hat brushed the wrong way, and his pockets bulging out with fives’-balls, stumps of half-eaten pears, and blotted *panas* (*i.e.* Punishment MSS.), than Spankie himself, brown-trousered Levi, Spankie’s next neighbour, and *vis-à-vis*, red-faced, straw-hatted Jobie, whose basket was a step further on, grey-coated old Brion, who wheeled about a whole vehicle full of confectionery, and certain desultory vendors, who sold apples peripatetically, would set up a chorus of howls and appeals, that would be taken up at the very school-gate itself by blue-cloaked Mrs. Pond—more familiarly “Missus”—who, seated on a low stool, retailing fruit and dormice, would shrilly call upon Jickling for pence long overdue. In school, Jickling was as unsatisfactory as out of it. When called up to construe, he never knew where to go on: often he had brought the wrong book; and, somehow, he generally contrived to get himself weighted with

subscriber to the latter pays 2*l.* 10*s.*, but must take his chance of any boat that happens to be unhired at the time he wants to row or scull, and has not the exclusive right to any particular boat. The cost of a “lock-up” may be shared by two friends, that of a chance boat cannot be. The word “lock-up,” taken in another sense, indicates the hour at which boys must be back to their tutors’ houses of an evening. This hour varies according to the season—the extremes being 8.45 P.M. at midsummer, and 5 P.M. during November and December.

a sentence to write out and translate the lesson before he had fairly started. And when he had started, who shall describe the torrent of solecisms, false quantities, and hideous errors of translation that flowed imperturbably from his mouth? With a coolness utterly and unquestionably beyond rivalling, he would declare that *bis* was the dative plural of *bos*, and *sum* the accusative singular of *sus*, and that the correct rendering of *basis virtutum constantia* was "constancy is the basest of the virtues." Sometimes indeed, under immediate and forcible threats of condign punishment, he would so far prepare his lesson as to go through it twice attentively with a "crib" before proceeding into school, and on such occasions, his memory not being retentive, he would generally treat his hearers to something in this style:—

(Reading.) "Nux ego juncta via cum sim sine criminè vita,
A populo saxis prætereunte petor," &c.

(Construing.) "Nux ego I nut, juncta via joined to the road-way,
cum sim sine criminè since I am without crime, *petor* am sought for,
prætereunte as I go by, *a populo saxis* by the Saxon people."— And so
on, until pulled up by a dismayed howl from the master, and enjoined to
write out Ovid's "Medea to Jason" in a legible hand, and bring it the
next day at one o'clock. As to Jickling's verses they stood on a par
with his prose performances, and were a continuous source of distorted
nightmares to our unhappy tutor, whose duty it was to correct and put
some sort of shape into them. It was currently reported that, having to
turn into hexameters the two lines,

He left a name at which the world grew pale,
To point a moral or adorn a tale,

Jickling had laboriously fabricated this:—

Nomen linquebat per quod jam palluit orbis,
Pungere moralem aut caudam decorare superbam;

and certainly this would have been rather above than below the average of his ordinary productions. Needless to add that, although Jickling was in lower fourth, that is, in the last division of the upper school, he had only arrived there after failing to pass his first examination out of the lower school. It was even rumoured that he would have been rejected the second time had it not been for the Macchiavellie determination of the lower master to get rid of him at any price, as a boy whose incurable idleness was contagious, and likely to corrupt the whole form. So there was Jickling, at the very bottom of his division—a boy of about twelve, with lank hair of a muddy flaxen colour; fingers permanently ink-stained; Balmoral boots that were never laced; and a curious white face, that looked inquiringly at you, out of a pair of eyes so wild, shifty, and defiant in their expression, that it was a wonder Nature had not taken them to put into the head of a polecat.

Now that Jickling should have flourished in our midst was a circumstance astonishing enough, seeing that of all the staid and proper young-

sters I have ever met with, we Etonians were certainly the most exemplary; but that he should have been the fag of such a fellow as Asheton was a downright puzzle; for Asheton being captain of the house, and entitled to four fags, might have chosen any one he pleased, and was under no compulsion whatever to select Jickling, who blacked his toast for him, spilled the gravy of sausages over his trousers, and when sent to carry a note, invariably took it to the wrong place. There could have been no community of thought or sympathy between Asheton and Jickling; for the two were simply as opposite to each other as white is to black, or coal to sugar. What Jickling did wrong, Asheton did well; and what Asheton did well, Jickling was morally certain to do wrong. Asheton was a quiet and finished type of that class of boys who at Eton are termed "swells"—a subtle designation, the exact meaning of which it is not very easy to explain to outsiders. A boy was not a swell because he dressed well, or played cricket well, or boated well, or was high up in the school. All this had to be touched off with certain social qualities, and a great—I was going to say almost exaggerated—air of personal dignity, before the swell was complete. Stumpes maximus, the best bat in the eleven, who would alternately slash an innings of sixty and be bowled out first ball; who slouched about the streets with his hands in his pockets, and nodded good-naturedly to lower boys of his acquaintance—Stumpes was a very pleasant fellow, and immensely popular, but he was no swell. Cashman, again, whose father owned five millions sterling, and stuffed a fifty-pound note in each of his son's waistcoat-pockets in sending him back to school after holidays—Cashman was anything you please:—well dressed, well bejewelled, generous and conceited, but nobody called him a swell, neither was he one. Asheton, on the other hand, was a swell *nem con.* He was not surpassingly excellent in anything, but he was good at everything, and might be relied on in everything. He pulled a capital oar, without great dash, but conscientiously and in fine form; he, moreover, bowled and batted well enough to hold his own with credit in any match that took place in that part of the playing fields called "Aquatics," and reserved for "wet bobs," or fellows whose habitual vocation was the river. At fives and football he was also counted among the first; but in these and all other pastimes the great merit of him was that his play was sure. As he had played to-day, so would he play to-morrow; there was nothing unequal in him, no wavering, no unexpected breaking down at a moment when all the hopes of his friends were centred on his performance. Personally, he was neatness itself. About eighteen years old, lightly built, and rather above middle height, he had a handsome aristocratic face of essentially English mould, though, perhaps, a little too serious for his age, and a figure that was fitly set off by the absolutely faultless style in which he dressed. His white cravat, tied as only Etonians used to tie them; his speckless linen, glossy hat, and trimly folded silk umbrella, were things to see, admire, and copy; the more so as Asheton was always trim, always speckless, always glossy, whatever befell—even though, for

instance; he had been rowing up to Monkey Island, and had reached Windsor Bridge on his return, with only seven minutes in which to land, dress, and run down to College, to answer to the calling of his name at two-o'clock "Absence"—a circumstance of not unfrequent occurrence, and always particularly trying to the "swell" temperament. It would be difficult to convey an idea of the extent to which we young shavers respected Asheton; but mind, I say *respected*, not *liked*; for Asheton would no more have familiarized with a lower boy in-doors, or taken notice of him in the streets, than a colonel would chum with a private soldier; and our feelings towards him were consequently much of the same reverential order as a soldier's might be towards an officer who was kind and just, but cold and a little of a martinet. When I have added that in his school-work Asheton shone pretty much as he did in athletics, that is, uniformly and moderately well, without startling brilliancy—that, for example, after an examination, his name was generally to be found between the fifteenth and the twenty-fifth on the list (out of seventy or eighty), and that in the half-yearly trials or "collections" he was habitually in the second class—I shall, I think, have said all that is needful to fill up his portrait. To sum up: Without being one of those overpoweringly good youths whom we are bound to admire in books, and whom, in private life, we do so deeply and ardently long to see flogged, he was a slightly prim, accomplished, and honourable young Briton, whom our tutor did well to enjoin us smaller boys to imitate, and whom we certainly should have striven to imitate whether he had enjoined it or no. Nobody would have said of Asheton (at least, not we his fags, who were apt to judge of things superficially) that he was one of those fellows who blossom out into Pitts, Cannings, Wellingtons, or other of those swell Etonians whose busts in marble adorn the upper school-room; but he was a boy who might develop, when the due season came, into an unimpeachable M.P., a Chairman of Quarter Sessions void of reproach, or, if he took to soldiering, into an officer who, in victory or defeat, would make an unbragging stand with his men against quintuple odds, and die, firm to his post, with cool intrepidity.

This said, by way of introducing my *dramatis personæ*, let me, with your leave, take up the thread of my narrative at the point where, having just arrived at Eton in the month of September of the year 185—, I learned that untidy Jickling and I were to be fag-mates.

It was not Jickling himself who brought me this piece of news, but Stumpes minor, brother to the Stumpes in the Eleven, who entered my room on the next morning but one after my arrival, holding a copper kettle in one hand and a plate of muffins in the other, and said, "Rivers, you're to come down with me to Asheton's room."

I cannot say this summons caused me anything like a great pleasure, for at the private school whence I came the word fag had been held up in *terrorem* over me by everybody who had ever pronounced it. Certain of my schoolfellows, amicably jealous, no doubt, of my going to Eton,

had given me clearly to understand that, as a preliminary to all further relations with me, my fag-master would begin by having me tossed in a blanket, then set me to blacken his boots for him, and that, on my failing to polish these to such a degree of perfection as would admit of his shaving himself by their help instead of in a looking-glass, he would order me to stand on my head in the middle of the room and take shots at me with a toasting-fork. Jickling, who had apparently divined the existence of these fears in the course of our first conversation, had, on the second occasion of our discoursing, taken benevolent pains to develop them; and he was in the act of gloomily relating to me how this very Asheton had once fagged him to go to the top of the "Long Walk," a distance of four miles and a half, walking all the way on his hands, legs uppermost, when he was severely interrupted by one Greegleby, four foot high, but irascible, and protector of the weak, who joined us on the pavement outside our tutor's house, where the interview was taking place, and cried out indignantly, "Shut up, Jickling: it's a chouse greening new fellows."

"You're always doing something caddish," followed up young Blazepole, whose head was like an orange-coloured mop, and who, leaning against a door-post, was gravely counting what remained of three pounds he had brought back with him after an equitable settlement of all his debts.

"None but a snob would tell such confounded cracks as that to a fellow who's not been here a week," pursued Greegleby, still very wroth, for it was evident that it went sore against his notions of morality that anybody should be deceived until he had been at school long enough to be prepared for it.

"If I waited a week he wouldn't be greenable," answered Jickling, coolly; and saying this, he turned one of the pockets of his trousers inside out, and proceeded to remove a piece of Everton toffee that was sticking in a corner thereof. "New fellows," added he, sucking the toffee, "are like puppies—they begin to see clear towards the ninth day."

"Don't mind what he says, Rivers," exclaimed young Greegleby, loftily. "Nobody pays any attention to him."

"No, nobody," assented Blazepole, who had just ascertained that his resources amounted to one pound sixteen shillings and a penny, and was restoring this wealth to his pocket-book.

So I was informed both by Greegleby and Blazepole, the one corroborating the other, that I had nothing to fear of Asheton, that he was a good fellow, and that he never bullied, because bullying was a black-guardly thing, only practised at "low shops," (and here Greegleby mentioned the public schools which he regarded as "low shops,") but never at Eton. Yet somehow these assurances must have left me not altogether convinced, for it was with something very like a feeling of being about to suffer tribulation that on the following morning I obeyed the summons of Stumpes minor, and followed him, the copper-kettle, and the muffins down to the room where Asheton lodged.

I remember this room as if I were still standing in it now, on that

bright September morning, with my heart going thump—thump against my brown waistcoat, and my cheeks flushed with anticipatory emotion. It was a largish room, perhaps twenty feet by fifteen, and had two windows, both of which were curtained with some warm purple stuff, which I took for silk, but which was probably not that, and filled with flower-boxes, where glowed some scarlet geraniums, whose showy coats stood out bravely against the dull bricks of a boarding-house opposite. The carpet under our feet was what is, I believe, called a Kidderminster, but it was an honest Kidderminster of good ruddy hue, chosen to match with which was the crimson figured paper, not very expensive I should say the yard, but handsome nevertheless, and sundry velvet brackets supporting pewter and silver prize-cups, on one of which I read floridly engraved : " *Frederick Asheton, Winner of the Pulling. Floreat Etona.*" In the way of furniture, provided by our tutor, and destined to pass along with the room itself to successive owners, were, in addition to the carpet above-mentioned and its attendant hearth-rug, a shut-up bedstead, which had done unmistakable service already, if one might judge by its venerable oaken complexion ; a bureau, on the leaf of which Asheton had (presumably in the lower-boy phase of his existence) carved his initials and crest ; four Windsor chairs, also carved and chipped ; a shut-up wash-handstand, with a piece of oil-cloth in front of it ; and a square deal table, covered with a red flowered tablecloth, and like the chairs, carved to any lengths, if you were only prying enough to lift up a corner of the tablecloth and see. But all these items played only a subsidiary part in the adornment of the chamber, for it is not to his tutor that an Eton boy looks to make his room cozy. From the day when he is installed in the small apartment, which is his to do with as he pleases (blessed privilege !), the boy's one thought is how to give it that habitable look which smells of home ; and in Asheton's case this preoccupation, extended over six years, had taken shape in pictures, stuffed-bird cases, and useful knicknacks, in such numbers as to make the room seem almost alive with comfort, colour, and cheerfulness. By gazing with a little attention, too, one could detect at what different dates the things had been bought, and so follow the boy through the various gradations of taste and culture engendered by his public-school training. Those flashy-looking sporting cracks, now relegated to an obscure corner, had clearly been purchased when a love of paint predominated over other considerations, and when the chief thing to be aimed at was the making of much effect with little money. By and by taste had improved ; the fourth form was abandoned and the remove was reached. The young investor had said : " Instead of these staring things that are too cheap to be good, I'll lay out a couple of pounds at one sweep." Yet not daring to trust his own taste so far as to select something quite original, he had resolved to buy what he had most often heard praised ; hence, " *Dignity and Impudence*" and " *Laying down the Law*, " by Landseer ; " *My Dog*, " " *My Horse*, " " *The Rent Day*, " and a few more prints as well known and popular ; inter-

mingling with which were a case of stuffed frogs playing cricket, and a case of stuffed squirrels fighting a duel, the blood of the worsted squirrel being realistically represented by a blotch of meandering sealing-wax. Then the upper-boy sphere of white ties, five-pound "tips" and ten-pounds half-yearly pocket-money, had been attained ; and trained enough by this time to essay his own taste unshackled, the lover of river sports and member of the Eight had chosen a really admirable series of water-colours depicting Thames scenery and artistically done by hand, not chromographed. You would think that this agglomeration of lights and shades must have formed a strange medley ; but no, everything was in its place, looked well where it was, and did its share towards making up that comfortable total which means snugness. There was no such thing as a vacant place on the walls ; every inch of space was filled up. Here a pair of prize foils with velvet and gilt handles ; here a miniature outrigger with the date of a race upon it ; here again, nailed to the wall near the fireplace, three ribbons, scarlet, dark blue and light blue respectively, and lettered, "Saint George," "Britannia," and "Victory," the names of the three boats to which Asheton had in turn belonged ; and there, five feet above the mantel-piece, a set of branching antlers decked out with a couple of those small silk flags such as flutter from the bows at boat-races, and with a gala straw-hat emblazoned with the Eton scutcheon, and made to be worn at the 4th of June and Election Saturday regattas. I shall not have enumerated everything, however, if I do not allude to a picture, of no great merit in itself, but which had evidently, through all changes and chances, held the same post in Asheton's room—and that the post of honour. It was a picture of a country-house—of home—executed by mother's or sister's hand, and hung just under the antlers over the mantle-shelf, the first thing that struck you as you went in, and the thing towards which the eye most gladly returned after roaming over everything else. Asheton had stuck a couple of home valentines in the frame of this picture, and in one of the nail-rings a wedding favour, memento of some home wedding.

I took in all this at a glance, though I have been five minutes describing it ; and I had leisure to examine the whole room in detail, while Stumpes mi., to whom, presently, was added Blazepole, began laying his master's breakfast-things. For Asheton had not turned round on our entry ; he was seated at his bureau, reading up his seventy lines of Horace for eleven-o'clock school, by the aid of Mr. Smart's translation ; and as Stumpes did not see fit to call his attention to my presence, neither, of course, did I. Stumpes directed me to take my stand against a wall—which I did meekly—and to watch how he "did the things, so as to be able to manage like me, you know, in a fortnight's time :" which I also complied with, for to see a cloth laid by so extremely small and dignified a person as Stumpes was somewhat of a novelty to me. First, Stumpes removed the scarlet tablecloth, and threw it to Blazepole, who folded it ; then the pair between them laid the white cloth, which Stumpes

had extracted from a cupboard, smoothed it, and set upon it a cup, saucer, sugar-basin, milk-jug, slop-basin, and two plates of a white pattern with blue rims. Then Stumpes possessed himself of a Britannia-metal teapot, and put therein three powerful spoonfuls of tea, holding out the pot at the same time for Blazepole to pour in boiling water *quantum suff.*; this done, out from the cupboard came a metal spoon, a knife and a three-pronged fork with white handles, three new rolls and a pat of butter—edibles that were promptly followed by a ham, drawn out of an open hamper, and laid by Stumpes upon a dish which Blazepole was sent to fetch; a Yorkshire pie and a pot of marmalade, the bladder covering of which Stumpes deftly removed with a knife, as if used to such work. The muffins came last, but were advantageously planted beside the tea-pot, along with a hot-water contrivance that had been employed to keep them from cooling. Then Stumpes, having cast a searching glance to assure himself that there was nothing wanting, he and Blazepole were seized with a violent fit of coughing, which would have effectually precluded all further work on Asheton's part, had he not understood the hint, and risen. It was then his eye lit upon me.

"Oh, I beg your pardon," he said, civilly; "I didn't know you were in the room. Why didn't you tell me, Stumpes?" With which words he seated himself at the table, and pointed silently to the ham, as a hint to Blazepole that the carving-knife and fork had been forgotten. Both fags rushed together towards the cupboard, exchanging mutual reproaches *sotto voce*. "Your name's Rivers, I believe?" added Asheton, buttering a roll. "Northamptonshire or Somersetshire Rivers?" And he made a second gesture towards the ham, thus intimating to Stumpes to begin carving, which that model fag proceeded to do on the spot with the expertness of a professional.

"Somersetshire," I answered, feeling very much like adding, "Sir."

"And in what form are you placed?" continued Asheton, receiving on his plate a slice of ham half a foot in diameter, and thin as a wafer.

"Blazepole, you've forgotten the mustard," whispered Stumpes, sepulchrally.

"It was you that forgot it," retorted Blazepole, in the tone of a conspirator; but he made a dive at the cupboard for the empty mustard-pot, and vanished out of the room with it, scrambling down the staircase four steps at a time, *en route* for the kitchen.

"In lower fourth," I replied to Asheton's question, feeling more and more like saying "Sir," and unable to take my eyes off him, as he ate a muffin, waiting till the mustard had arrived.

"Well, you are excused fagging till next Thursday week," he rejoined, cutting up his ham; "and after that you'll fag for me, along with Stumpes there, Blazepole, and Jickling. But, by the way, where is Jickling? Has he shirked fagging?" And Asheton looked up from his plate and round the room inquiringly.

Stumpes did not immediately answer. He had no respect for Jick-

ling, but he had a great deal for those time-honoured principles that prohibit tale-telling ; so, with more solicitude for the interest of these principles than for those of abstract truth, he proceeded to invent an excuse for his absent fag-mate, not knowing more than the man in the moon to what that absence was due.

"I think my tutor sent for him after prayers," he said.

"What about ?"

"Probably for not being at prayers," responded Stumpes, bravely.

"But he *was* at prayers," remarked Asheton.

"Then it must have been for something else," said Stumpes, perplexed ; but he was spared the trouble of drawing further on his imagination, for at that moment there was a precipitate shuffling of feet in the passage, and a double entry—Blazepole with the mustard, and Jickling himself with nothing.

It was the first time Asheton had seen Jickling that half, so he held out his hand.

"How do you do, Jickling ?" he said.

"Do, Asheton ?" mumbled Jickling, extending a dusky paw.

"Late, of course," pursued Asheton.

"Yes," returned Jickling, withdrawing the paw, and thrusting it deep into a trouser-pocket, where, finding some coppers, it began to rattle them.

"And what's this I hear," asked Asheton, helping himself to mustard, and speaking without a smile, "that you've already been flogged, by way of beginning the half well ?"

"Yes," said Jickling, gloomily ; "I had seven cuts."

"For shooting peas ?"

"They were small peas," remonstrated Jickling. "Besides, I don't see what right a master has to nail me when I'm in a coloured tie. I was in the train—hadn't yet reached Eton, nor put my black tie on. The train stops at Hanwell. I fish out a pea-shooter, and let fly at the engine-driver of a neighbouring train. A master pokes his head out of the next carriage-window, and says, 'What's your name ? Where do you board ? I shall complain of you.' I call that snobbish."

"What do you call shooting the peas ?" asked Asheton, quietly.

Jickling stared ; but, after turning the matter over, declined to take any notice of this question. He recommenced to rattle his coppers.

"Ah ! that reminds me," broke in Asheton ; "before you've spent all your money, please to pay me your football subscription."

Jickling pulled an excessively wry face ; not so Stumpes and Blazepole, who, with the alacrity of habit, and without being asked, drew out their purses, and laid on Asheton's table the sum of three shillings and sixpence apiece.

"It's for the footballs, the goal-sticks, the cad who takes care of the balls, and the beer we drink after playing," explained Stumpes to me in a whisper. "Fork out yours too." And under Stumpes' direction, I forked out 8s. 6d.

Jickling, meanwhile, had rummaged in his pockets, and produced a sovereign, which he gazed at with an eye of affection, as apparently his last. Then, after a good deal more fumbling, he managed to scrape together the requisite smaller sum, parting, however, with all his copper money to effect this total, which formed a brown heap on the table. Asheton had been silently disposing of his ham. He now looked up fixedly at Jickling, and said, "Have you paid all your debts, Jickling?"

"What debts?" asked Jickling, sulky and embarrassed.

"Your ticks to Spankie, Jobie, and the other men at the wall. You owed them all something."

"Yes," grumbled Jickling, more and more sulky.

"Then, you owe no one anything now?"

"Nothing," answered Jickling, in a tone and with a morose look that bore an economy of truth on the face of them.

"Well, then," returned Asheton, either believing or pretending to believe, "you are free to make a fresh start now, and to turn over a new leaf for the future—and you must try and do it for your own sake. I don't want to say anything unpleasant, mind you," added he, in a voice which I think took us all aback from its sudden seriousness; "but up to this time, Jickling, your life at Eton has been a failure; and as we all in this house are concerned for our own honour in not seeing you go to the bad, I mean to keep a sort of a look-out over you this half. Yes. I don't mean to spy over you or pry about you, or anything of that kind; but I shall make an attempt to render you fit for something, as you've hitherto been fit for nothing. Last half, and the half before, you never played and never worked. You spent your time mooning about, with your face unwashed, your lessons unlearned, and no sort of object in life but to catch flies, count the dogs in Fisher the birdman's yard, run into idiotic mucks, and get swished. That won't do. Be anything you please—a sap, a dry-bob, or a wet-bob*—but be something. Going on as you're doing, you'd be a confirmed muff, and perhaps a leg, by the time you're twenty; and then, of course, you'd lay it half to me, and say that if Asheton, who was your fag-master, had done his duty, you wouldn't be where you are. And that's true. If I had a brother here, I shouldn't let him follow the road you're treading, so I don't see why I should allow you. I'll say more—I don't think it would be honest or fair to allow you. And now that's enough," concluded Asheton, quietly pouring himself out some tea. "You may run along, all of you; and as for you, young man" (turning his eyes on me), "bear in mind what I've just said to Jickling. Be something: give yourself an object, and, if it's an honourable one, you won't be sorry for it by-and-by."

In another minute we were all standing outside Asheton's door, and I, whom my fag-master's few words had impressed more than any pulpit-sermon I had ever heard, drew a sigh of relief to think what my fears

* "A sap," "a dry-bob," or "a wet-bob," *Anglîcè*, "a bookworm," "a cricketer," or "an oarsman."

of the morning had all come to, and what manner of a fellow it was I was going to serve.

"Is he always like that?" I asked of Jickling, with some emotion.

"Yes," answered Jickling, in huge indignation; "he's always fond of jawing. What business has he to question me about my ticks? they don't concern him. And why does he say he shall spy and pry into me all this half? He hasn't the right to do it. No, he hasn't. And it's hateful snobbishness of him to pretend he has."

Whereat Jickling turned round facing the door, and raising his hand to a level with his countenance, made, I regret to state, with his displayed fingers, that gesture which, in all times and in all countries, has been expressive of contemptuous defiance.

II.

Our life at Eton was by no means a monotonous one, and a new fellow especially had so many things to visit, be initiated in, and marvel at, that his first month was a sort of honeymoon, very different from the first months at ordinary schools. We were not overburdened with work either, as times then went; or, to speak more correctly, we had plenty of work set us, but didn't do it, which came to the same thing. I used sometimes to wonder, as I sat on those good hard brown benches in the upper school, just under Camden's bust, what kind of thoughts must pass through our master's mind as he contemplated the seventy-five of us who formed his division, and ruminated over the distressing idea that not ten out of the whole company knew their lessons, or had known them yesterday, or purposed knowing them to-morrow. I do not mean to say by this that we were all as slothful as Jickling. The difference between him and us was, that we kept up appearances. When called up to construe, we could generally stammer through the lesson without committing more than a rational number of blunders—say one per line; and we strove to do our verses and themes in such a way as to occasion us as few introductions as possible to the head-master. But beyond this, perhaps, the least said the better. It used to be the golden rule at Eton to give us twice more work than we could honestly do, and to class us in divisions three times as big as a single tutor could conscientiously supervise; the result of which was that, with the exception of a few paragons (chiefly collegers or foundation boys) in every form, who went by the graceful epithet of "sap," and were regarded with a respectful and affectionate contempt by the rest, everybody did just the amount of study that was absolutely and barely necessary to keep him out of trouble, but no more. And what this bare amount was may be pleasantly judged by the fact that even when a boy had reached to such a position in the school as Asheton occupied, he still learned all his lessons by the aid of the Bohn classics, feeling quite powerless to master them otherwise.

I mention this to explain how it was that I found I had a good deal of spare time on my hands as soon as I settled down to Eton life. My

comrades quickly inducted me into the science of taking things easy with regard to school-work; and Jickling, who was an apt teacher that way, would have had me adopt the same spirit in all the other businesses and obligations of our small world. Somehow he had taken a fancy to me, had Jickling. It must have been my newness that did it, and also the circumstance that we two were neighbours—which allowed him by the way to bear down upon me at all hours and borrow articles of my property, which he scrupulously forgot to return. Jickling was not only one of those boys who are bent upon going wrong themselves, but he dearly loved to drag others into scrapes with him. I was warned of this fatal propensity on his part both by Greegleby and Blazepole; Stumpes mi. also conveyed a friendly admonition to me on the subject, and Asheton one morning sent for me on purpose to say that I must be careful what I did when Jickling was by to advise me. But these counsels, though they kept me from falling into any of Jickling's more dangerous snares, did not remove him from my company. He was always with me. He acknowledged with a candour that did him honour, that he liked "fellows whom you could humbug till all was blue;" and on my soliciting an explanation, abruptly and gravely asked me when my birthday was.

"In October," I answered, naïvely.

"Next month?" said he. "Well, it's to be hoped" (and his eyes glared on me half-intimidatingly)—"it's to be hoped that you'll do what's usual, and not be mean and shabby as some new fellows are. Every new fellow who's worth his weight in rags, goes to Goodford and asks him to give the whole school a holiday on the first birthday he spends here. Only the rule is to ask a month in advance, so as to prevent mistakes, and allow Goodford time to order the fireworks."

"What fireworks?" I inquired.

"Why, the fireworks that are let off in the playing fields on a new fellow's birthday," answered Jickling. "And then there's the ginger-wine. After the fireworks, ginger-wine's handed round, and everybody has a glassful. Fifth form, two glasses full. You'll have to see to all that."

Now there was nothing improbable in any of this to my fresh and unsuspecting mind. At my private school (we had numbered twelve there) every birthday had been an occasion for festivity, and ginger-wine had always formed a prominent feature in the day's entertainment. I saw no reason why it should not be so at Eton; nay, I considered that Eton, being the worthier place, would probably hold the more strenuously to a worthy custom. So, to be brief, that self-same afternoon I was standing, by Jickling's direction, under the colonnade of the school-yard, in the presence of Dr. Goodford and of all the school prepostors, gathered together, as was the rule, to deliver their bills of absentees, or of boys on the sick-list, after three-o'clock chapel. Dr. Goodford, seeing me stand beside him with my hat on, began by asking me, with stately courtesy, whether I had a cold in the head.

I was about to answer that a tiresome cold, which had afflicted me

some six weeks before, had happily disappeared, and to thank him for so kindly inquiring after it, when an opportune nudge from a prepostor to the right, and a cavernous whisper of "Hat!" from a prepostor on the left, brought me to a vague sense of the situation. I uncovered, reddening; and Dr. Goodford then begged to know, with the same high politeness as before, to what he was indebted for the pleasure of my visit.

I spoke without a shadow of diffidence, and asked for a *non dies* for the whole school (Jickling had furnished me with the precise words) in honour of my birthday, which fell on the 25th of October. . . .

I have not forgotten the interminable laughter that followed, nor the convulsions of one particular prepostor, aged eleven, and habitually mournful, who rolled about against the colonnade pillars, holding his hand to his waistband, and shrieking "Oh my!" from the intensity of his feelings. I was known by the name of *Non Dies* ever afterwards, and heaven knows what never-ending jokes this first successful and cruel hoax of Jickling's entailed upon me.

The only one who did not laugh at it was Asheton; and as he had seriously set himself to the regeneration of Jickling, he told that youth roundly and firmly at fagging next morning that he meant to have an end of this. Jickling sulked. Ever since that disagreeable morning when Asheton had hinted at the necessity of his turning over a new leaf, his life had not been happy. Asheton insisted now upon his washing his hands and face properly, brushing his clothes and keeping his room in order. Nothing could be more distasteful to Jickling. His room was generally a higgledy-piggledy of torn books, crumpled papers, and scattered clothing. Great splashy stains on the carpet marked the spots where he had let fall successive inkstands; and the solitary picture in his room was crashed right through the middle, from having been used as a target for a roll in a moment of sportive ebullition. All this was put to rights. The broken picture, by Asheton's order, was consigned to the dust-bin; the clothing was, by Jickling himself, acting under Asheton's surveying eye, neatly folded and put away into drawers; a cageful of unhealthy dormice, whom Jickling seemed to rear tenderly for the especial purpose of taking them out in his pockets and letting them loose in school, was summarily confiscated, and on Jickling protesting loudly and untruly that these mice were his private and unseizable property, since he had paid for them, their full value (four shillings and ninepence) was remitted to him in money. On the whole, Jickling began to see that a firm hand was exercising its sway over him. Asheton went the length of seeing for himself every evening that Jickling learned his lessons for the next day, and did not pass his time tracing patterns on his bureau with a red-hot poker, as he much preferred to do.

But there was one point on which the feud between the two was ceaseless and terrible. Every day, or at least every half-holiday (and there were three of these a week) a game of football was played in our

tutor's field, and everybody was expected to be present at it. The object was, in the first place, to train good football-players for the House Eleven, and in the next, to make the games really pleasant, which they would not have been had the attendance been fitful and limited. Now, nothing would induce Jickling to play. Most solemnly was he told that if he were not at his post in the field at the time when the game began, it would go hard with him. He declined to take any notice of these menaces, and when the game began he was invariably wanting. "What's the use of my going to football?" he pouted angrily, as Asheton caught him in the very act of bolting up the High Street one morning after eleven-o'clock school. "I never touch the ball once during the whole game. It's always you swells who have it; and then, when the game's over, you drink all the beer, and I get none."

"That's not true, Jickling."

"It is. I turned the can upside down yesterday; there was nothing in it. I ought to know."

"You're teaching Rivers to be as disreputable as yourself. What are you doing with Jickling, Rivers?"

"He was going to show me a dog," I stammered.

"A mangy brute you swore you had got rid of at the end of last half," said Asheton, indignantly, to Jickling. "Now, I'll be bound you meant Rivers to buy this dog of you. Did he, Rivers? Tell me the truth."

I hung my head. Such was indeed the aim of our expedition. Jickling had consented to sell me a mongrel cur, which I didn't want, nor he either, for fifteen shillings and sixpence. He had assured me that it was part of established and insurmountable usage to possess a dog, and that by not having one I should be holding myself up as an object of scorn and derision to the community. We were on our way to the bird-fancier's where Jickling kept the brute.

Asheton guessed much of this by our faces, and though we were standing in the most frequented part of the street, and though, as I have already stated, it was not his habit to take the slightest notice of a lower boy in public, he dealt Jickling such a box on the ear as almost sent him backward into a shop-window. "A fellow who will sell a worthless dog to a credulous school-fellow at twelve will sell spavined horses at twenty, and be kicked off race-courses at twenty-five," he exclaimed, pale with anger. "Now cut along both of you in front of me to Fisher's, and I'll follow. We'll just see into this matter."

The pair of us trooped on together without a word—Jickling dogged and sullen, but not crying, for he was not the fellow to shed tears at a slap of the face, or indeed at any other physical mishap. Asheton walked at a safe distance behind—near enough to preclude all idea of escape on Jickling's part, far enough not to let it be seen that he had us both in custody. In this way we reached a small and dark bird-case shop, which we entered, and so passed down a long and narrow passage at the back into a yard, which was, like all bird- and dog-fanciers' yards, filled with

curls chained to kennels, plaintive terriers who had their ears cropped and were whining shiveringly; wool-stuffed and pin-trussed bird-skins, set up in the sun to dry; melancholy rabbits in hutches, and so on. Jickling's dog, conspicuous by a total absence of breed and by deficiency of hair, was seated on his hind-quarters, and set up a dismal music at our approach.

There was an old man, with a weather-beaten hat, giving a puppy milk out of a broken saucer. He looked up, expecting to see some of the lower boys, who were his most constant customers; but on catching sight of a fellow in the Eight, he rose from his stooping posture and fingered the brim of his head-dress.

"Fisher, which is Mr. Jickling's dog?" asked Asheton brusquely.

The man addressed as Fisher pointed to the beast, and added, apparently for his own private satisfaction, for he could scarcely expect that anybody else would concur in the remark, "And a 'andsome dawg too."

"Is he paid for?" continued Asheton.

Fisher glanced at Jickling as if to know what this meant. Jickling wore such a hang-dog expression that there was no making out. Asheton had taken out his purse, which was a manner of eloquence that Fisher seemed to understand. He cast a second look at Jickling, and then said, "Yes, sir, but there be twelve shillin's owing for the keep and doctordin' of him. Very ill that dawg has been—took more than a bucketful of physic last holidays."

As if to assent, the cur raised his head aloft and piped the most dole-some notes.

"Did Jickling tell you there were twelve shillings owing?" inquired Asheton of me.

I shook my head. Jickling, seeming to apprehend a second edition of the box on the ear, backed to a prudent distance. But Asheton simply said, "It looks, Jickling, as if you had meant to sell this dog without telling Rivers that he was virtually in pawn, and leaving him to find it out for himself when he had paid you the money. But as this pretty transaction was not completed you are entitled to the benefit of the doubt. Now pay Fisher."

In sulky silence Jickling fumbled for his purse, and presently muttered that there were only six shillings in it. Asheton looked for himself afterwards, feeling Jickling's waistcoat-pockets, and ordering him to turn those of his trousers inside-out. This injunction only produced an odd half-penny, seeing which Asheton said he would pay the other six shillings himself, and did. "And, now, what's the sum you were to give Jickling, Rivers?" proceeded he, looking hard at me.

"Fifteen and six," I answered, piteously.

"What a maff you must be," he rejoined, with a half smile. "Well, Jickling, I shall buy your dog of you—you may consider that I owe you nine-and-six."

"A 'andsome dawg, sir," repeated Fisher, with suppressed enthusiasm. "What's to be done with him?"

"Since you seem to admire him so much, you may keep him," answered Asheton. "And now, you two, be back to college, and go off to the football field. Your nine-and-six, Jickling, I shall give to Spankie. You told me at the beginning of the half that you owed him nothing—I've learned that you never paid him at all."

"I did pay him," grumbled Jickling. "Spankie has told you a lie." But as if to render the discomfiture of Jickling complete that morning, we were no sooner out of Fisher's shop than who should come waddling down the pavement but this very Spankie, who immediately made a wheezy dart towards Jickling, and spluttered, in the fat way peculiar to him, "Ah, Jickling, sir, you're a bad lot, sir. Owed me ten bob, you did, sir, and never thought of giving me a sixpence of it. No, sir—not you, sir—catch you, sir!"

He is dead now, poor Spankie, and there can be nothing personal in sketching him as he was in his declining age—a fat, puffy, red-faced man of sixty, with a greasy hat which, if boiled down, might have furnished a pint of oil, and a double-breasted faded blue coat, buttoned military-wise up to his chin. He was well off was Spankie, and public rumour made him out to be richer than perhaps was really the case; but for certain he had subscribed 50*l.* to the building of St. John's Church in the High Street, and for certain, too, he led a snugly luxurious existence in the small well-furnished house he rented near the Fives' Courts. Of a Sunday, too, he would bloom out superbly in black clothes, grey gloves, a smoothly ironed white or nankeen neckcloth, and a hat of unexceptional finish—in which guise he would walk, prayer-book in hand, to the church he had helped to build, and declare himself a miserable sinner with a fervour that was very much to his credit. But the distinguishing feature of Spankie was his acquaintance with the nobility of these realms. The man was an ambulating peerage. He knew Lodge by heart, and Burke's landed gentry, and everything about everybody who had ever done anything, or was likely to do anything by-and-by. Impossible to catch him tripping as to who was the son of who, or who was the heir to this or that estate. The following pattern of dialogue would take place between him and new fellows in the lower school or fourth form, who wished to buy wares of him on credit.

"Spankie, I want you to tick me," would say a young gentleman some three feet and a half high, directing his hand towards the fruit-basket.

"No, sir; I never tick, sir. What's your name, sir?"

"Plantagenet," would answer three-foot-six, raising the lid of the basket, and thrusting his head in.

"Oh, the Earl of Plantagenet. Yes, my lord; many's the apple I've sold to his Grace your father; but he chiefly liked tarts, did his Grace. Help yourself, my lord. I never takes ready money of a nobleman, my lord. Not that they often offers it me—they don't; but it would be all the same if they did, my lord."

Whereupon young Plantagenet *would* help himself, and do so again

the next day, and the day after,—and, at the commencement of the next school time, find himself charged five times more than he expected ; for it was a sagacious custom of Spankie's to charge rather according to the means of his customers, than according to the actual value of the goods they had purchased of him. In this way mistakes were prevented.

As to Jickling's debt, it probably amounted, in real truth, to five shillings, or thereabouts ; but Spankie, with a very pardonable love of round figures, had set it down at ten, appending an extra penny-halfpenny for form's sake, and to convey the idea that he was sedulously minute in keeping his accounts. He now called energetically upon his debtor to liquidate the moneys due ; and appealed, bowingly and puffingly, to Asheton, to see justice done him.

" There is no reason to excite yourself," said Asheton, coldly—for he evidently disliked to see an Eton fellow insulted in this pitiful way by a tradesman—and he handed Spankie a half sovereign. " This," said he, in a dignified tone, that quickly brought Spankie's greasy hat from off his venerable head, " this is money I owe Mr. Jickling, and he has requested me to pay you. But for the future, mind, whatever Mr. Jickling takes of you will be paid for there and then. You understand."

Spankie either did or didn't understand, but he made a profound inclination of the head, saying, " Yes, sir ; of course, sir ; I always knew I could trust Mr. Jickling, sir. 'Ave a apple, Mr. Jickling. That's what I've just been to Windsor about, sir, to buy apples at the market, sir—a fine Ribstone, penny apiece, sir ; pay me when you please, sir."

Habit was so inveterate in Jickling, that, despite everything he had just gone through, he actually stretched out his hand on hearing that a new credit was opened to him, and would have taken the forbidden fruit had not Asheton pushed him roughly by the shoulder, exclaiming, " You incorrigible young beggar you ! I declare there's no trusting you even in one's sight. Now run off, and if I don't find you at football when I come, you'll see what will happen. As for you, Spankie, I warn you that if you trust Mr. Jickling again, I shall forbid him to pay you. Whatever he owes you I shall get from him, and hand over to my tutor, to put into the poor-box. You know I keep my word."

We played football, Jickling and I, that day, and were kept severely to that pastime on every subsequent half-holiday or holiday. Asheton reasoned that whilst playing football one was at least out of mischief ; and much as Jickling disliked the game, and little as I myself enjoyed an amusement which consisted, for lower boys, in racing in a flannel shirt after a football which only upper boys caught, we soon had to make a virtue of necessity. Punctually as the time for beginning the game arrived, Jickling would be seen to march ruefully on to the ground, under the escort of Blazepole, Greegleby, and young Stumpes, whom Asheton had imagined to render responsible for his presence ; and such was the wholesome effect of these repeated and much-hated games, that Jickling positively found no time in which to get into scrapes, and tided over a

whole month without being once flogged or getting a *pæna*—if we except fifty lines once or twice for being late in school or at chapel. Those, however, who have seen a nag reputed weedy and vicious, ridden by a horseman who kept it well under by dint of whip, spur, and curb, know full well that the conduct of the animal, whilst it has its rider on its back, affords no sort of clue to the demeanour it may adopt when the rider is away; and so it was with Jickling. His doing well for a time was a matter of compulsion. Asheton's look-out was so constant, that shying or kicking was impossible. But Jickling was not reformed by any means; and before this could be effected, he had still had one quagmire scrape to wade through, which, whilst it almost cut his career of scrapes short to all eternity, was indirectly the means of making him turn over a new leaf much more decidedly and definitely than Asheton or anybody else would ever have dared hope. This scrape was brought about by Windsor Fair.

III.

Windsor Fair was an annual episode that enlivened the month of October. It was a three days' saturnalia, during which the royal borough was turned upside down, and all Eton kept in a state of adventurous effervescence. Eton boys were forbidden attending the fair, owing to cheap gambling that was conducted by means of low roulette-tables in a spot called Bachelor's Acre; but like many other prohibitions at Eton, this one was made with a very complete knowledge on the part of the masters that nobody had the slightest thought of paying attention to it. Very strange the spirit that occasionally actuated the Eton authorities. If it had been really desired to keep the boys from the fair, one would think that nothing would have been easier than to station somebody permanently on Windsor Bridge, to send back every boy who attempted to cross. A master might have done it, or a detective. But instead of that, the course pursued was, to give out that all boys caught at the fair would be flogged; and as this sort of warning never yet deterred any Etonian from doing as he listed, the scene at Windsor during the three days was one of reverend gentlemen in white cravats perpetually chasing boys in and out of booths, over gingerbread stalls, up and down highways and byways, greatly to the edification of profane spectators, and considerably, of course, to the upholding of pedagogical authority.

Now it stood to reason that Windsor Fair should be to Jickling the one bright date in the year's calendar. It was better than the Eton and Harrow match, and than 4th of June: for you broke no rule by going to Lord's or to Surly Hall, whereas in the Windsor Fair there was the fun itself, then the pleasure of being vainly chased by a master you hated, then the ineffable delight of breaking rules, all three rolled into one—perfect bliss in short. It therefore fell like a thunderclap on Jickling when, the evening before the first day of the fair, Asheton said to him: "Mind, Jickling, I won't have you going to the fair, for you'll be certain

to come to grief in some way if you do ; and I've made up my mind that grief and you are to be kept apart this half. If I hear you've been to the fair, you shall have double fagging for a month, and something else besides."

Not go to the fair ! Even Stumpes and Blazepole thought this a stretch of prerogative. They had been following, with a sympathizing eye, the efforts of Asheton to make Jickling walk in a straight line, for Jickling had been undoubtedly such a byword of reproach in the school that he almost reflected discredit on the house in which he boarded. But for all this, to interdict a fellow from going to the fair, where everybody went, and where Asheton himself would certainly go, was hard ; and Stumpes minor and Blazepole looked compassionately upon Jickling, as though he were being victimized. As for Jickling himself, he said nothing ; but I readily guessed, from the expression that stole over his stubborn face and flashed out of his shifty eyes, that to the fair he meant to go, all prohibitions notwithstanding ; nor was I wrong.

The next morning, at about half-past eight—that is, after first school—I was engaged in taking a " bun and coffee " at Brown's the pastry-cook's. There were four pastrycooks within the College precincts, and Brown's was the lower-boy house—a place where you got such coffee as I have never tasted since, either here in England, or on the Continent, or in the East ; though, to be sure, I have not tried Brown's coffee since I was fourteen, which, perhaps, renders me indulgent. The price of this coffee per cup was twopence, and that of the buttered bun that accompanied it another twopence—total price of the banquet, fourpence. We could cram about a score together, at most, in Brown's little shop, and the place was always as full as an egg : so full, indeed, that on the morning in question, being on the point of stuffing my last fragment of bun into my mouth, I was powerless to turn round, on feeling an arm laid upon my sleeve tuggingly ; but I recognized the voice. It was Jickling's, and said :—"I say, Rivers, I'm going to the fair. Will you come ?"

" And fagging ? " I asked, astonished.

" I'm going to shirk it," said Jickling.

" And prayers ? "

" I shall shirk them too," was his answer.

" I daren't," I ejaculated, timidly.

" Then you're a funk," responded Jickling, with great contempt. " This is just the time for the fair. All the masters are busy between nine and eleven. There'll be two at the most there, probably only one, and we've got two whole hours and a half before eleven-o'clock school. I'm going, whether you do or not ; but I must say I shouldn't like to funk a swishing as you seem to do," sneered Jickling, with diabolical derision.

" I don't funk a swishing," I protested, blushing up to the roots of my hair.

" Then you funk a licking from Asheton for shirking fagging," railed

Jickling, waxing more diabolical. "I don't care that for Asheton; and I'm just going to the fair now on purpose to spite him, the brute."

Now I did not like the imputation of "funking." Being in my heart of hearts considerably afraid both of the swishing and the licking, I was the more concerned to show that I stood in not the slightest dread of either of these ordeals. Some more conversation ensued between us, importunately tempting on his side, feebly resisting on mine; and the upshot of it was that, several other boys agreeing to join the party, I no longer had the moral courage to hold aloof; and in another ten minutes (having swallowed a second cup of coffee to screw up my valour to the starting-point) was crossing Windsor Bridge with a beating pulse, throbbing heart, and eyes strained to see if they would not behold a master spring up like a jack-in-the-box at the next street-corner.

The noble old town that Windsor is! and, perhaps, never more noble than during these fair days, when the glitter and bustle of the booths, the animation of the crowd, the tinsel trappings of beast and giant shows stand out in contrast with the stately grandeur of the Castle. The booths used to stretch right down to the Castle's foot, at the point called the Hundred Steps, and wind away through the town up to the Bachelor's Acre once mentioned, making an unbroken row on either side of the roadway. At Bachelor's Acre lay the focus of the fair. Here were the circuses, shooting-galleries, skittle-alleys, Aunt Sallies, roulette-tables, and all the fun that is popularly described as fast and furious. In the town everything was more mild. One could buy gilt gingerbread there, flashy porcelain, false noses, masks, and other interesting objects, and indulge in such slow gambling as may be afforded by betting pence on marbles set to race down an inclined plane studded with pins. But, if you wanted excitement, your way lay to the Acre, and thither, of course, we all sped.

The walk through the town without meeting with a single master had emboldened us, and I, for one, felt much more comfortable in stepping into the Acre than I had done in setting foot on that boundary bridge that divides Buckinghamshire from Berkshire. Jickling, who was always bold, showed himself the more so on this occasion from the possession of a sovereign, given him a couple of days before by a relative, who had unexpectedly come down to see him. A fourth-form fellow with a sovereign imagines himself, not quite master of the world perhaps, but lord of a good half of it. Jickling was no sooner in the Acre than he directed our attention to the booth where a learned pig was exhibited, and suggested we should go and see, the admission being moderate—1d. a head.

We streamed all together into the learned-pig show (I think we were nine), then into a booth where was a calf with two heads, and so on through the usual round of fair monstrosities, not forgetting a lady who weighed five-and-twenty stone, and who, to give Jickling an idea of her muscular powers, which he seemed disposed to question, lifted him up in mid-air by the seat of his unmentionables, to his intense disgust. By this

time we had forgotten that such people as masters existed, and a little intoxicated by the beating of drums, the squeaking of pandean pipes, the braying of horns, and the inspiriting sounds of loud barrel organs spurring the cavalcades of merry-go-rounds, we turned a ready ear to the blandishments of a costermonger, who, behind his barrow, had got a roulette-table, screened by a kind of sackcloth contrivance of poles and ropes, and "safe as the Bank."

The costermonger was one of many who conducted business on a safe and pleasant principle. They decoyed as many boys to stake pence, six-pences, or shillings as they could, and then, when the board was well covered with money, a cry of "Here's the masters coming!" would be set up by a husky confederate; whereat the boys would jump away like affrighted frogs, and the stakes would disappear flowingly into the pockets of the costermonger. Unfortunately, even such a simple system as this has its drawbacks, and the main one was that, after trying on the joke a few times, it became the story of the wolf in the fable, and nobody would believe the husky confederate charmed he never so wisely. Jickling, who had gathered practical experience of Windsor Fair the year before, was up to a good many moves on the board, and his first step when behind the sackcloth screen was to exclaim, in his quick, wild voice, as he laid a shilling's-worth of pence on the table, "Now, no master *can* see us here; so if this fellow or anybody else cries out *care*, it'll be a false alarm, mind that." I suppose the words could hardly have been out of his mouth, when, without the slightest warning, without a single premonitory indication of peril, the visage of the Rev. Mr. Jones, a stern master, intruded itself behind the screen, and froze us all—including the costermonger-croupier, I think—positively breathless with astonishment and terror. Mr. Jones must have seen us at a distance, before we had passed behind the canvas, and he now contemplated us with that calm, sure, and sardonic eye of a sportsman who has got all his fish in the net, and need not hurry himself. In his right hand he carried a pocket-book, from which he proceeded to draw the pencil, ready to write our names down.

The space of awful time that we stood looking at one another—he grimly pale, we speechless—can scarcely have exceeded ten seconds, but it remains branded on my memory as if it had been ten hours. My sensations were as if the soles of my boots had become of lead, and suddenly soldered me to the earth. Then Jickling, who had inspirations of genius in such moments, abruptly dashed his handkerchief over his face, and pulling me by the hand, shouted wildly, "Come! if we bolt, he can't catch us all." And, saying this, dived through the aperture facing that where the master was standing, and rushed out precipitately, forsaking his pence to their fate, I following him, and the rest plunging after me.

All this was enacted with the instantaneousness of thought; but imagine the breaking of the net in the sportsman's hands just alluded to, and you will have the position of Mr. Jones. He had made too sure, paused just one triumphant second too long to consider his haul before

calling upon us for our names, and here was the result. But he was a man of energy, and quickly buckled to. Though all the nine of us had flown headlong and quadrivious, dexterously eluding the grabs he made to right and left of him, he did not forget who was the author of this misadventure, and without a moment's hesitation started after Jickling and me, leaving the other seven to go their ways unhindered.

No pair of gazelles ever ran as Jickling and I were doing. Bachelor's Acre is a hollow and sunken piece of ground, full of ups and downs, and rugged. Over these ups and downs we leaped and bounded, with our hair flying to the winds, and our eyes starting out of their sockets. At least, I answer for mine. Jickling, more cool, buttoned up his jacket as he ran, kept his elbows well pressed to his sides, and threw his head back to give his legs all their fair play. We scampered thus to the end of the Acre, and scaled its steep sides, not knowing until then whether Mr. Jones was following us or the others. But here all doubt left us. Our friends had sped to the four cardinal points, and were presumably safe; but, straight as the crow flies, the Rev. Mr. Jones was bearing down upon us, our start of him being not more than fifty yards. The moment's agony which burst upon us when we made this discovery may be readily conceived. But it was no use feeling agonized. "There's a passage down there which leads across Peascod Street to the Great Western station," gasped Jickling. "Keep up, Rivers; don't blow yourself." And this was no vain caution: for, short as the distance was we had covered, I already began to feel as if I could not go much further at this rate.

The passage into Peascod Street was a terribly narrow one, where two could scarcely run abreast, and where, should we chance to meet anybody coming in the opposite direction, we might be so delayed as to be caught like rats in a trap. Jickling saw this; indeed he had a hunted fox's instinct for scenting danger. There was a cad with a basket on his head coming out of the passage as we ran up. This seemed providential. Jickling took out a half-crown, threw it to the man and panted, "Do you see that fellow in the white tie running behind us. Stop him at any price. Trip him up!" The cad was an honest cad. When Mr. Jones appeared at eleven-o'clock school that morning, a fine scar on the face, and some remains of dust on the shirt-front, testified to the neatness with which he had been sent sprawling on all fours by a purely accidental movement of the foot performed by the basket-man. This increased our lead by a hundred yards and gave us a second's breathing-space we much wanted; but we were not safe for all that. Mr. Jones was not the man to drop us for a fall more or less. A short, sallow, straddling little divine, with an immense lurking power of limb, he had determination enough to chase us till Christmas if need were. We soon found this out; for having imprudently paused to draw breath in the uphill alley leading out of Peascod Street to the railway, instead of waiting until we reached the railway itself, where we might have dodged our pursuer down passages and given him the slip by concealing ourselves in a porter's room, we

saw him emerge from the Thermopylæ where he had been tripped up, brushing his knees with his handkerchief and purple with rage. He saw us, and was evidently stirred with delight to the depths of his soul, for he shot us a glance of no dubious meaning and redoubled his pace, we doing the same by ours.

But now the hunt was going to assume a new complexion. In Bachelor's Acre there had been no great crowd at that comparatively early time of morning, but in the streets it was another affair. Precisely as we reached the station a train of old Etonians, from Oxford and Cambridge, steamed in, and these understanding at a glance what was the matter, when they saw Jickling and I run, broke into shouts of laughter and gaily joined in the chase as spectators, to see how it would all end. Any inoffensive stranger who beheld the spurt that followed through Windsor Thames Street must have fancied it was a lunatic asylum burst loose. Two well-dressed boys with streaming faces running at the top of their speed as if they had been stealing spoons ; fifty yards to the rear of them a clergyman of the Church of England, with a most unchristian glare on his countenance, also putting his best foot foremost ; and behind the clergyman, the mob of university-men, unable to hold their cigars in their mouths from laughing, and doing their utmost—one must render them that justice—to impede Mr. Jones's progress by getting in his way whenever he seemed to be gaining too fast on us. There was especially one Oxford-man, whose name I afterwards learned was Martingale—Lord Martingale—and who did us valiant service. His lordship was an enthusiastic sportsman, and this boy-hunt was to him like drinking fine elixir. Racing along by our sides with his eyeglass screwed in his left eye and his lavender-gloved hands describing frantic gyrations in the air, he bellowed vociferous encouragements to us in a turf voice : "Now then, young 'uns, go it ! I'll back you to win at five to one ! If you're not caught you breakfast with me at the 'White Hart' to-morrow—champagne and all the deuce, and a five-pound tip for both of you. Go it, I say, go it !" His lordship's noise was so terrific, and, in a general way, the scene was so tumultuous, that it brought out tradesmen to their doors ; a few windows were thrown up ; some ladies paused on the pavement to look and exclaim, pityingly, what a shame it was to chase those poor boys so ; dogs began to bark, and all the tag-rag and bobtail of Windsor scattered among the fair booths hurried up, hooting, and formed a befustianed rabble, that may have been two hundred strong by the time we were at the bottom of Castle Hill, after a race that had left Jickling and me with hardly the ghost of a breath in our bodies. But now it became urgent to take some immediate resolution. We could not go on long like this. If Mr. Jones did not give up the chevy, as it was not likely he would now that he was the cynosure of so many eyes, we must inevitably be overtaken, for our legs were not of a strength to cope with his. Here was Windsor Bridge in sight. What were we to do—make for Eton, or branch off down the Datchet Road, towards the Home Park ? Jickling, undaunted to the end,

though his strength and his hopes were beginning to flag, called to me in a broken voice for my opinion—meaning to say, had I wind and spirits enough left for a new effort? I was not able so much as to answer; and the question was settled for us by Lord Martingale, who shouted that by going towards Eton we must certainly be caught, seeing that we should probably meet other masters in the street; whereas, if we went up the Datchet Road, we might prolong the chase, and perhaps tire out our enemy. "Yes, but if we take to the Home Park," gasped Jickling, "we shall be run down in the open." "Needn't go into the Park," answered our Mentor, suddenly struck by an idea. "Make for the coal-wharves behind the South-Western Station: you can lie hid there, and then double when Jones has passed you, which he'll be safe to do if you don't give him time to see where you hide." But, unfortunately, this advice, like many other good counsels, was impracticable, by reason of its coming late. Our pursuer was now not more than twenty yards behind us; he was gaining too, and it seemed as though another couple of minutes must see our fate sealed. At this juncture, Jickling called upon me for a final spurt. We were in the Datchet Road, close to the South-Western station. In half a minute we had reached the door and dashed through, right into the midst of a crowd of people taking tickets for the next train. A guard made an attempt to stop us; Lord Martingale pushed him roughly aside with an oath. Down the platform we sped, stumbling over luggage, jostling passengers, and trampling an unfortunate dog under foot, amid piercing shrieks from his mistress. At the extremity of the platform, Jickling leading the way, jumped down in front of the engine that was about to start, crossed the line, in disregard of the chorus of shouts and imprecations set up by stokers and porters; ran for a short way between the two lines of rails, and struck off towards some waste grounds skirting the towing-path by the river-side. Martingale and I were of course close at his heels.

This was no bad move: for Mr. Jones, a clergyman, could not act in defiance of the railway company's by-laws, as we had done. He would be obliged to go round by the wharf way to catch us, and this would give us a start of about ten minutes. At least, so we reasoned; but we reckoned without our host. Mr. Jones simply waited on the platform until the train had started—that is, rather less than five minutes—then, there being no objection to his crossing the line, did so, and followed the identical path that we had taken. We learned afterwards that during the five minutes he spent on the platform the old Etonians with him had pleaded for us, appealing to him to renounce his pursuit, in consideration of the gallant struggle we were making. But the very gallantry of the struggle seemed to Mr. Jones the most cogent reason for bringing us to punishment. He proclaimed his determination as he mopped his brow with his yellow silk handkerchief, and brushed what remained of mud and dust off his pantaloons, not to give us up on any account; and he kept his word: for, as Jickling and I were pelting along

the towing-path at about half a mile from the station, Martingale, who was in ecstasies at our escape, and counted upon our being able to find a punt or a skiff or something to take us across the river further down, looked round, and suddenly exclaimed, with real dismay in his voice, "By Jove, he has stolen a march on us, and HERE HE IS!"

Something seemed to break inside me: it was my last spring of courage giving way. We had run so desperately, our hopes had so revived at the thought that by passing through the station we had given our pursuer the slip, that to find this was all useless, and that we were on the very point of capture, was cruel. Martingale, almost as much concerned as we, cried out, with something very like emotion, "Well, never mind. D—n it! I'd rather do what you've done than win the Derby. You're a pair of young bricks, that's what you are, I'll give my solemn word." But this, after all, was but cold comfort. There we were, with the towing-path before us, an open space of meadow to our right, and the river rushing in a broad swift stream to our left. Escape was impossible. In this despairing moment Jickling turned abruptly round, like a young cub at bay, looked at me with fire in his eyes, and in a voice of frenzy cried, "I say, can you swim?"

A thrill seemed to shoot through Martingale. He glanced at the river, then at me.

"Yes," I gulped, with a great dry sob; for, indeed, I could swim, having learned that accomplishment at home.

Jickling stroked the perspiration that was bathing his forehead, looked hungrily at me again, and in that moment his Ishmael countenance was radiant.

"But swim—in your—c-c-clothes?" he stammered. "Can you? Will you take your oath you can?"

He had clutched me by the jacket.

"I'll take my oath I can," I panted, with the amazing courage of fear and hopelessness.

"Well, look here," said Jickling, darting a distracted glance behind him. "I'll believe you, and we'll swim for it. Only—h-hark, if you drown, I'll drown myself too; and if—I do that" (there is no depicting the solemnity with which he pronounced the next words) "my father, who is coming home from India next Christmas, will write to *The Times* and say it was your fault."

I think I felt the terrible weight of this threat; but Martingale, who apparently saw nothing to laugh at, turned round and made a sudden and violent use of his handkerchief. When he showed us his face again, I could have sworn his eyes were not clear.

"You shan't drown, I'll swear that!" he said, energetically; "not unless I do so too."

We had scrambled down the bank by this time and were holding on by some tufts of grass. The water was quite deep under us and turgid and rapid. Opposite us lay the Eton playing-fields. Jickling shivered,

but I could see it was not for him, but for me. He looked wistfully to see if the master would not give up the pursuit; then seeing that Mr. Jones (who, of course, could have no idea of what we were going to do) was close upon us, he muttered: "We can't let ourselves be taken," and floundered headlong in. Even before I had risen to the surface after following Jickling, I could hear the tremendous uproar of astonishment and consternation, and withal of admiration, that arose when Mr. Jones and his companions perceived what we had done. The throng of old Etonians, roughs and street-boys that had escorted the master, crowded on the bank, straining their eyes with genuine anxiety to see what would become of us, and surely thinking that we were not going to rise again. But when it was seen that we not only rose but struck out for the opposite shore as well as our heavy water-filled clothes would allow us, loud cheers burst forth and rose in peal upon peal to encourage us. Mr. Jones, who was not a hard man, and whose sense of humanity was now getting the better of scholastic considerations, ran in dismay up and down the bank, shouting to us that if we would come back he would not report us. But we either did not believe him, or did not hear him, or thought that once in, it was as well to go the whole way. Jickling was swimming a little in front of me, his tall black hat bobbing curiously above the water like a float. As we reached mid-stream, however, he slackened so as to let me come up with him, and faltered with a sudden expression I shall never forget: "Mind—you—swore you could swim, so if anything happens it won't be my fault, will—it, eh, Rivers?" "No," I gasped, not immediately understanding what he meant; but then it passed through me with an instantaneous flash that we had both of us overrated our strength—that worn out as we were, we were making no way against the stream, and that Jickling had said this because he felt himself sinking. He turned round again, as if wanting to say something, with a terrible expression of anguish in his eyes; but his lips as they opened disappeared under water. I made a sort of unconscious clutch at him and he rose; but with all the strength left, he shook himself free and gasped as the stream bore him out of reach, "No, you'll drown." And then I remember no more, for I sank too.

IV.

It was rather more than a month after this that Jickling and I were seated in my room together in my tutor's house, looking rather cadaverous, both of us, with our pale faces and close-cropped heads. We had been within an ace of drowning. Lord Martingale and some other old Etonians had saved us; but a brain-fever had supervened, and once again, after escaping a watery grave, we had seen death face to face. However, it was all over now. We were on the fair road to convalescence; and Mr. Jones was calling upon us every day to learn how we were, and to cheer us with a few minutes' talk: for he had a good heart, this Mr. Jones, and took a liking to us after the terrible adventure of which he was the unwilling cause.

It will scarcely be believed that on recovering Jickling showed himself what he had always been—that is, much more delighted at the exceptional character of his last scrape than thankful to Providence for the way in which he had come out of it. On the particular day when we were seated in my room together, as I have just said, he was charming the leisures of convalescence by manufacturing a short paper tail like a kite's, evidently with the intention of pinning it to some comrade's jacket as soon as he should be well enough to go into school again. Asheton entered as he was writing on the tail the words, "Please kick me," saw the work, shook his head and said, with a kind, half-pitying laugh, "Always the same, Jickling?"

Jickling did not like Asheton. He put away his tail with a grumble in his pocket as if he were afraid it was going to be taken from him, and muttered, "I don't see any harm in that."

"Nor would there be any if it wasn't of a piece with so many other tricks of yours, Jickling. You'll give up those tricks now, after all that's happened, won't you, young man?" And he laid a hand on Jickling's shoulder.

"What's happened? what tricks?" asked Jickling, in great discontent, moodily twitching his thumbs.

"Well," replied Asheton, "you and Rivers there have become heroes as it were; and it's been said that a fellow who has the stuff in him that you showed on that Windsor Fair day is worth better things than to be continually in hot water, and at sixes and sevens with everybody."

Jickling changed colour slightly, went to the fire, poked it violently without its having any need of such operation, and said, "You're always badgering me, Asheton."

"I want to see you a good fellow, and on the highway to becoming a man," answered Asheton, with almost a woman's patience.

"What is, is," said Jickling, doggedly. "You can't unmake yourself, and you can't do what's impossible."

"And what's impossible?" asked Asheton.

"Why," cried Jickling, breaking out, and throwing down the poker with a clatter, "it's impossible to be this and that simply because you are told to be it; and it's impossible to do this or that, when you've not strength enough. What should you say if I told you to win the football-match against the Collegers this year? It seems you're in the Eleven—and they're stronger than you. You know it. So let me alone."

There was a moment's silence, then Asheton walked straight up to Jickling. He had become very pale, but looked at his unhappy fag with a steady and earnest expression in his eyes.

"I know the Collegers are stronger than we," he said, "but will you promise me"—(he paused)—"will you promise me, Jickling, that if I win the match for our side—you'll change?"

Jickling looked growlingly surprised, and glanced at him with sullen suspicion. "It's not much to promise," he said at last, "for you won't."

"But *will* you promise?" asked Asheton.

"Well then, yes," said Jickling, with a dry laugh and a shrug.

"Very well," answered Asheton, and he left the room.

The match, Collegers *v.* Oppidans, played every year on St. Andrew's feast, 30th November, was the great event of the football season. At the time of which I am writing it was not usual for the Oppidans to win every year, as has later been the case. The match was played "at the wall," a peculiar sort of football, which the Foundation boys practised more than the Oppidans, or Town boys, and as a result the College team (although the Collegers had only seventy boys to choose from as against nearly six hundred on the other side) was extremely powerful and difficult to beat. On the day of the match, Jickling and I, who had not yet been out of doors since our accident, obtained leave to go out for two hours—just to see the match and return.

Play began at half-past twelve, and there was always an enormous crowd—every boy in the school, every master and master's family, and some hundred or more of old Etonians, being generally present. Jickling and I took up our position at that part of the ropes where the lower boys congregated, making a frightful hullabaloo in response to the gown-boys, who, at every advance of their side, shouted like fanatics, as if the safety of the three kingdoms were being staked. For those who have never seen "wall" football played, a description of the game would scarcely be intelligible; and for those who *have* seen it, it would be useless. Let me only say, therefore, that the points to be scored are "goals" and "shies," a single goal outnumbering any quantity of shies. By the end of three quarters of an hour's play, three shies had been scored by the Collegers' Eleven. The game was going dead against the Oppidans, who, opposed to a formidable trio of Collegers, named Bullockson, Hulkey, and Drayman, were overweighted, borne down, and forced back into their own ground, or *calx*, every moment, notwithstanding all their gallantry. Asheton had been performing prodigies of valour in the Oppidan cause, but to no purpose. Five minutes yet remained before the game finished; and the conclusion seemed foregone. Jickling, who had been watching the game with a curious, silent interest, said with a short laugh (but rather softly as I thought), "Asheton's played well, but he won't win."

Did Asheton hear him? Did some secret voice, I mean, whisper to him that some such words as these were passing Jickling's lips. Anyhow, he glanced towards us, or at least towards the mass of yelling lower boys (for he did not know where we personally were), and with a determined gesture took his cap off and threw it on to the ground. It was the action of a man who is preparing to fight.

Then this is what we saw. The ball was then within the Oppidan *calx*, but a sudden movement brought it before Asheton's foot. He stuck to it, and from that moment it did not leave him. Crouching, stumbling, running over it, playing with feet, elbows, and head all together, he "bullied" it right down the whole length of the ground, unheeding kicks,

pushes, mobbings, or anything else. Hulkey, the College "post," shinned him savagely; Drayman bore down upon him with his shoulder, like a battering-ram; and just as Asheton was within a few yards of the Colleger calx, Bullockson, the captain, made a rush as of thunder, and both rolled over together, heads first, in the mud. There was a moment's breathless lull in the whirlwind of shouts, to see who would rise first with the ball. It was Asheton. Limping and bleeding, for the blood was flowing in torrents from his nose, he still crouched over the ball, and, with something like superhuman energy, shot it over the calx-line, followed it, raised it with his foot against the wall, and touched it with his hand, whilst the umpire, in a loud voice, and amid delirious excitement, shouted "Shy!"

A "shy" means the right to take a shot at the goal with the football, the whole rival eleven standing in your way to obstruct you. Not a boy or man spoke, as Asheton, white as a sheet, poised the ball, raised it, and, with another look towards us, threw it straight forward. There was a thud, a dismayed shout, and then the Oppidan umpire, throwing his hat in the air, cried, "Goal."

At that moment the College clock clanged out half-past one—the time for play to stop. The Oppidans had won the match.

With a roaring—loud, deep, and continuous as the waves of the sea—the Oppidans burst the ropes, and rushed on the ground, scampering towards Asheton to carry him in triumph. Jickling and I were borne along with the rest, adding our own voices to the tumult mechanically. Asheton seemed to expect us. Just as the mighty Bullockson was taking him to lift him on his shoulders, he made a step forward, and holding out his hand (the first and last time he had ever done such a thing to a lower boy in public), said: "You see, young man, it *was* possible."

Jickling said nothing, and walked along by my side back to our tutor's house without opening his lips. He was pale and moody, and I remember he kicked a particular pebble before him, as he went, with a strange and absent expression. At dinner-time he said he was not hungry, and went and shut himself up in his room. He had not re-appeared by tea-time; and as it so happened that I desired to see him that evening about something or other, I went to his room, and opened the door. The hinges did not creak, so that he did not hear me nor look up. He was seated at his table, with his head buried in his arms, and he was sobbing as if his heart would break.

* * * * *

If you ask nowadays of any old Etonian who Jickling was, he will probably answer you: "Jickling? Do you mean the fellow who was Newcastle Scholar and in the Eleven? He went to Oxford—didn't he? and took double honours."

"I think so."

"And, stay, didn't he marry somebody? I think it was the sister of Sir Frederick Asheton."

The Voyage and Loss of the "Meyāra."

"SHE was an unlucky ship." This was said of H.M.S. *Meyāra*, the loss of which vessel has been occupying public attention for some months of late. There is no denying she was an unpopular ship, and had earned for herself a reputation for discomfort. She had been a troop-ship; and officers and soldiers who had sailed in her had generally grumbled over the accommodation. This time she was not exactly acting as a troop-ship; she had passengers on board, but they were all blue-jackets—relief crews for the *Blanche* and *Rosario*, two ships to be recommissioned in Australia, instead of coming home. Captain Thrupp was appointed to the command, and on out-arrival at Sydney he was to exchange with Captain Montgomerie, of the *Blanche*. The *Meyāra* had also a quantity of stores on board, for Ascension, the Cape of Good Hope, and Sydney. There had been much grumbling before she started, and still more when she was obliged to put into Queenstown, three days after leaving Plymouth, to refit. She had encountered stormy weather, and it had made her deficiencies more evident. It was said she was overloaded, overcrowded, and leaky. The men were discontented, and no wonder, for the main-deck, where they lived and slept, was ten inches deep in water, and their kits were wet through and spoilt. Thirty boys, sent on board in a hurry at Plymouth, had not even hooks to sling up their hammocks. Sea-sick, soaked and miserable, they were not likely to forget their first voyage at sea. The officers were not satisfied, for thirty-three had to be contented with the accommodation for twenty-two; their cabins were flooded with water, and, for want of store-room, their mess-traps were broken and their stores soaked. This was a bad beginning; however, the captain, of course, reported defects, newspapers published complaints, and questions were asked in Parliament. In consequence, the Port-Admiral inspected the "unlucky ship," and many of the evils were remedied. A hundred tons of the cargo were landed, the troop-deck cleared for the berths of the men, and new cabins built for the officers. The leaky ports were repaired, and the removal of part of the stores having lightened her, she was not so likely to ship water. On the 14th of March—the Admiral having pronounced her ready for sea—the *Meyāra* sailed from Queenstown. We had light, fair winds nearly all the way across the Bay of Biscay, and the ship behaved much better, was easier in a sea-way, and steered better. We arrived at Madeira on the 21st, just as the equinoctial gales were beginning. We were all much more comfortable on board, and determined to make the best of everything and enjoy ourselves. One evening we had great amusement harpooning porpoises; they all, however,

escaped before we could haul them in, the ship was going so fast through the water. We had a drum-and-fife band on board, which played very well, and a couple of fiddlers, and also an harmonium, which we used in the service on Sunday. Some of the men had very fair voices, and were not unused to a choir, so the chants and hymns were well executed. A stiff gale was blowing all the while we were in harbour at Madeira, and we stayed there a day or two longer in consequence. One evening we had a grand performance on board. First, some conjuring from the Great Wizard of the South—a sergeant of marines—who performed very cleverly, doing the bottle-trick, burning handkerchiefs and restoring them, firing watches from pistols, &c. &c. After that, we had singing, clog-dancing, fencing, and orchestral music. The very day we sailed from Madeira the equinoctial gales ceased blowing. At St. Vincent we stopped a day and a half to coal; we took in a new passenger—a good-tempered monkey, who came on board; the owner followed, but could not catch him, so he went on with us to Ascension, where we landed him. By this time, we had all settled down sociably together, croaking had ceased, and, as the captain encouraged employments and amusements among the men, many entertainments took place, which promoted contentment and good feeling. Besides the conjuror and the drum-and-fife band, there was a troop of Christy Minstrels, and we found some respectable performers on the flute, accordion, and cornet, among the crew. The officers got up entertainments for the men, after the fashion of the Penny Readings, so popular now on shore for winter evenings. On the first occasion the captain made a speech, praising the men for the efforts they had made to amuse their shipmates and enliven the monotony of the long voyage, and saying, that as all deserved encouragement who exerted themselves to promote the happiness of others, the officers would now endeavour to do their best, following the example set them by the men. Tremendous applause followed, and we certainly had most attentive audiences for our entertainments, which were given on Thursdays when the weather permitted. We had pretty fair weather on the whole, occasionally very cold, but the wind was against us, and we made but slow progress. Our best run was on the 18th of May, when we made 211 miles in twenty-four hours. This gale found out the weak points in the rigging, and many ropes were carried away. We arrived at the Cape, notwithstanding, all safe, and there refitted, coaled, and landed some of the stores; and had a very pleasant time while completing these operations, some of the officers making excursions on shore, playing cricket-matches, or shooting. We left the Cape on the 28th of May. "Sunday sail, never fail," as the sailors say,—but good luck did not attend it this time. The old *Megæra* went away at a good pace, with a fair wind; we were all in good spirits, hoping to reach Australia in thirty-five days, quick enough to carry them news from England.

It was on June 8th that our troubles began. It was a dark night, a heavy sea was running, and we were going nine knots, when the butcher

fell overboard. One man thought he heard a splash, another had seen a marine go forward ; but it was not ascertained that any one was missing for ten minutes or so, when we had gone over a mile from the spot. The wind was against us, no life-buoy had been let go : so it would have been mere mockery to heave to, and lower a boat, risking twelve men's lives to save one, who must probably have already perished. Nothing could be done ; but the incident cast a gloom over our spirits. In the middle of the night, the captain was aroused to be told the ship had sprung a leak, and that there were seventeen inches of water in the hold. The donkey-pump was at once manned, and for a time we gained on the leak. Great was the consternation that spread through the ship, when all heard the intelligence next morning. Rumour exaggerated the calamity, and it was said there were three feet of water in the hold, and the ship beginning to sink. We were 1,600 miles from any land, about midway between the Cape and St. Paul's, a small rocky island in the Indian Ocean ; but the wind was foul for returning, so it seemed best to press on with all speed. Each day the leak increased. More pumps were manned, without being able to keep the water under ; then a party was employed baling, hoisting up the water in iron buckets all day long to the sound of fife and fiddle : sixty buckets an hour. The engineers were crawling all about the ship's bottom, under water half the time, in search of the leak. The horrid wash of the water from side to side, as the ship rolled, was enough to make your flesh creep, and still the water gained on us. So we got up steam and used the bilge-pumps ; these were more effectual, but necessitated our shortening sail, lest, while using steam, we should overrun our screw. Our great object was to push on as fast as we could to St. Paul's for safety ; however, it was no use sailing quickly if we could not keep down the water ; unless the pumps acted, we should go down to a certainty, in spite of all haste, before reaching the island. It was on the 13th of June, about eleven o'clock at night, that the engineer on watch announced he had found the leak. The captain and chief engineer at once examined it and consulted together. The only way to see it was to lie down, and put your head through a small hole, turn it round (with the water washing close to your nose), and look to the left. About seven feet to the left was the water squirting up with great force, like the fountain from a fire-plug in the street when turned on. It was under the coal-bunker ; and the only way to get at it, was to cut a hole through the iron girder large enough to put a hand through. It took twenty-four hours' hard work to make this hole ; and, meantime, the engineers hopefully pronounced that the leak was only produced by a rivet dropping out. This might soon be stopped ; so the idea caused great cheerfulness : but, alas, our spirits soon fell again, when the work was complete and the leak could be examined. It was not a rivet-hole, but a plate that had given way. It was much worn and thin, nearly eaten through by rust in several places ; the edges of the hole were quite sharp, like the blade of a knife, and might easily be

bent by the fingers. An iron plate was prepared, faced with gutta-percha, to be placed on and secured against the leak,—but we dared not press it home, for fear of forcing out the whole plate, and then we should have sunk in a few minutes. While the engineers were at work at this, other hands were busy "thrumming a sail," that is, making it into a sort of door-mat, by doubling it, stabbing it, and drawing through the holes short bits of untwisted rope; afterwards it is tarred, doubled, and put over the leak. This expedient works well if the leak is in the bows of the ship; for then, as the vessel goes through the sea, the action of the water presses the thrummed sail into closer contact; but in the situation of the leak in the *Megæra*, exactly the reverse would occur; the action of the water would have tended to pull it away from the hole. We had, fortunately, a diver's dress on board, intended for the use of the *Blanche*, whose screw would have to be repaired under water if any mischance occurred to it. The captain made the diver try the dress now, and saw that it was ready for use, that there might be no delay in sending him down when we should reach the island; and another plate was prepared similar to the first, with a spindle to it, which could be put through the leak from the outside, and then screwed to the inside plate with a nut. We were still pushing on with all possible speed for St. Paul's, through a tremendous gale of wind, every one looking black and unhappy, the leak continually reported as gaining, and more men wanted at the pumps, till at last every officer, man, and boy was told off to take his spell at the work.

About seven o'clock in the evening of the 16th of June, it was judged we must be approaching St. Paul's, and we therefore shortened sail, and prepared to heave-to. We had hardly done so, when it came on to blow a perfect hurricane, and the night was dark as pitch. Nothing more could be done, and we were all worn out with hard work, so in spite of our anxiety we turned in to get some rest, and recruit for the toils to-morrow might bring. The morning broke wild and stormy; little could be despaired through the squalls of rain, when suddenly a cloud lifted astern, and there was the blessed island, the haven of our rest, not quite nine miles off. Never did distressed seamen hail land with greater delight than we did the sight of that dear little island. The sea was very high, huge waves rolling, but off we went full speed, and presently shot into smooth water under the lee of the land. The diver was sent down at once to survey the leak from the outside, and report on it, while the engineers examined the inside more thoroughly. Two hours afterwards we found ourselves drifting away from the shore, the anchor was weighed, and it was discovered to have lost both flukes,—the shank had broken in the middle. We steamed in again rather closer, and anchored for the second time; the squalls of wind and rain were very heavy, blowing the surf into the air in whirlwinds, like dust on a March day. The bottom was very rocky, thinly covered with black sand, and we were compelled to steam to ease the cable. The engineers reported very badly of the ship. Not only was the whole of the plate in which the leak occurred

thin and corroded, liable to give way at any moment, but the iron girders which formed the framework of the ship (corresponding to the ribs of a wooden ship) were eaten away by rust, and separated from the bottom, which they ought to have supported. Another trouble arose: the pumps at which the men were incessantly working, and the action of which kept us afloat, were now frequently choked with pieces of iron from the rotten girders. Constantly, both in the day and night, they had to be cleared, the valves being taken off. Next came the diver's report of the state outside the ship. He said many places were nearly leaks from rust and age; and he could easily have picked through the iron plates with his knife, but "thought it was not right." The attempt at mending the hole was made, however, and for a short time seemed successful, but before long the water came in as fast as ever, perhaps from some fresh leak. There was no possibility of giving it more attention, for the stormy weather continued, and we were in imminent danger. The anchorage was so bad, that anchor after anchor gave way, and the ship was driven in nearly on the rocks; once we were only saved by going full speed astern, with all steam, which just carried her off again. We had understood that the captain, up to this time, was still hoping to be able to proceed to Australia if he could stop the leak; of course, had he so decided, we should all have done our duty; but there was hardly a man in the ship who did not believe she might go down at any moment with us all. It was a great relief, therefore, when on Sunday morning, having turned all hands up and read the service, the captain announced that we were to abandon the leaky old craft and land on St. Paul's. How the men cheered! And how hard we all worked, officers as well as men, hoisting our boats and provisions and making a raft to convey the stores to land. By dark we had landed most of our provisions. We found two Frenchmen living on the island—for it is a whaling and fishing station; and there were sundry old sheds and huts which had been used for salting fish or boiling oil—on the only spot of level ground, on the left side of the crater basin. The shape of the island is like a sailor's collar; the space occupied by the neck in the latter representing the crater lake, the ridge where it folds over the high cliff surrounding the basin, and the tie connecting it the reef or bar stretching across the entrance. Imagine that the said cliffs rise steeply to the height of 860 feet round the inside of the crater, and slope downward gradually to the outer or west side of the island, and a fair idea may be formed of St. Paul's.

* On the 19th, the weather was worse than ever: we were close to the rocks: our third anchor had broken, and we had but one left, we kept under steam therefore. Twice we were nearly lost; the squalls were so heavy we could not keep our position. Our decks were covered with casks, but the weather was so rough that three of our boats, in conveying them to shore, were almost wrecked on the reef, and we began to fear we could save nothing but our lives. At last it was determined to run the

ship on shore, so that if she broke up, we should still be likely to save more than if we waited till she went down outside. We signalled to the boats near land to remain inside the bar, where they were safe in the smooth water of the crater lake, and we hoisted in those still alongside. Then the men set to work bringing up all they could from the lowest decks, which would be likely to fill soonest with water. Our operations were hastened by the difficulty of preserving our position, the ship being quite unmanageable in the squalls. All hands were ordered on deck, and not a word was spoken as we steamed full speed for the bar. It was an anxious moment; many of us feared she would part amidships as soon as she struck on the bar. All were ready to jump overboard when it came to the worst. It was curious to see how carefully some had prepared: one had put his newest clothes on, another was wrapped in a mackintosh to keep the wet out,—some had life-belts, and special treasures secured in their hands. Thank God, our fears were groundless. As we neared the bar, the wind came on the beam, and with crash, bump, and scrunch the poor old craft took the ground in grand style,—the rocks going through her bottom and holding her fast. The ship made a bed for herself and settled down as upright as if she had been on the stocks. Then we all set to work; the officers got some boats belonging to the shore and themselves loaded them, rowed them to land, and discharged them; and when the decks below were cut open to get at the coal, they worked up to their waists in water, filling coal-bags till they were as black as sweeps. We never washed for a week; the chart warned us there were no fresh-water springs on the island, and each man was allowed but a pint a day. Thinking this would be our great difficulty, and our condenser being under water, the main-deck tank was taken ashore, and strengthened to serve as a boiler, from which pipes led along under water close to the shore to another tank. In four days the engineers completed this condensing-apparatus, by which, using dried turf as fuel, 150 gallons of water could be procured in twenty-four hours. Meanwhile, parties of men were sent to look for water; they found hot springs, nearly-boiling,—but too strongly impregnated with sulphur to be used for drinking. A further search discovered a large pool of rain-water near the summit of the crater ridge, 860 feet above our camp. The ascent being so steep, there was some difficulty in getting at it, and the sailors going up with barricoes to fetch water, came flying down head over heels. However, a hose was soon rigged up for the whole length, and a party of marines and signalmen stationed up there to fill the hose, and keep a good look-out for a sail. After this, we were never at a loss for water; the season being winter, was favourable for us in that respect: the frequent rains and storms kept the pool full, though trying enough otherwise. Once there was even snow at the signal-station.

No one had a tent to sleep in for three or four days after we landed, and before the officers began constructing their own tents or huts every man was provided with shelter. The old ship was not wholly abandoned till the

29th of June—before that, forty men and thirteen officers (including the captain) remained on board of her, getting out all the stores they could save, but the smell of bilge-water was very bad, and at last forced them to land. There was much good-tempered rivalry among us in the building of our houses ; some were much more successful than others ; the best had names given them :—"The Redan," "Rose Cottage," "The Folly," &c. We had loose stones to build with, but no mortar, and we were obliged to use most of the canvas we were carrying out in stores to make out our tents. The weather was very stormy during the greater part of our stay on the island, and some of the old and worse-built huts were blown down ; the rain would pour down the sides of the hill, and turn the camp into a perfect swamp. The men were kept employed, and continual improvements made—new roads levelled, a small pier constructed, and an esplanade, as we called it—somewhere to walk without climbing up the hill. The chart says the climate of St. Paul's is healthy ; our experience confirmed the assertion, for notwithstanding the rough life we led—exposed to wet, and on scanty provisions—there were but few cases of illness amongst us. We were very careful of the men, taking care that they shifted their clothing whenever they got wet, and that their tents were kept dry and clean. The captain had canvas leggings made to protect their legs, but boots and shoes wore out very fast on the rocky shore and hills. The island furnished considerable additions to our stock of provisions ; plenty of fish might be caught—a large kind of cod, and another fish which tasted like salmon, only the flesh was white ; large sardines with golden bellies and greenish grey backs : by-the-by, we were told these were poisonous, but we ate them all the while we were there without any evil result. Lobsters and crawfish abounded. There were wild goats on the hills, perhaps a hundred altogether, but they were very wild, and we did not often get near enough to kill them. In one of our walks, or rather scrambles, three of us came on a small troop of them, but the enormous horns of the old goats when they turned at bay on the edge of the cliff, where a charge from them might have sent us rolling down some hundreds of feet, convinced us that, unarmed as we were, discretion was the better part of valour, and we retreated. We had our revenge a few days later—several fell victims to our guns ; one, a very patriarch, with formidable horns and venerable beard, whose head, I believe, the captain preserved, to testify to his skill as a shot. Cats ran wild on the island, but did not exterminate rats, which also abounded. Some of us, following the example of the Parisians, tried the latter, as an article of food, and found them very tolerable eating. The birds were too coarse and fishy to help our diet, and the captain gave orders they should not be molested. It was very amusing to see the large flocks of penguins arriving from seaward ; landing and talking away at a great rate, they would form a procession and proceed to inspect our camp, the blue-jackets accompanying on each side, and laughing at their odd motions. So tame were they, that it was impossible to keep them out of our tents ; they

would hold a consultation, and then while some engaged the attention of the sentry in front, others would dart in behind his back, setting up cries of triumph. We could not make out what they lived on; sometimes a number would arrive, apparently exhausted with a long voyage, and presently set off straight up the hill, and remain there for weeks. Whalebirds also frequented the coast, living in crannies of the cliff, where they made a noise like the mewing of kittens—which deluded some of the sailors into a hunt for cats'-nests!

There were neither trees nor shrubs on the island, but plenty of grass and herbs of various kinds, a few cabbages and potatoes, planted by former visitors, and a quantity of mushrooms. We tried dandelion salad, and plantain boiled as spinach, and even grass as vegetable. There were some very pretty ferns to be found, especially round the mouths of some caves we entered. Some flower-beds were made under the windows of the captain's hut, in which celery-seed was sown and some bulbs planted which the Frenchmen gave him, but we came away before they bloomed.

One of our first cares was to rig up a signal-station on the height, with our flag reversed as a signal of distress; and when a sail was discerned in sight guns were fired, rockets sent up, blue lights burnt, and the life-boat sent out in chase. Five vessels passed in fourteen days, without our being able to attract their attention. We also sent afloat lots of bottles as sea-messengers, and life-buoys prepared as attractively as possible, painted red, and surmounted with flags, through which were stamped the words, "Look within." The life-boat took these out to sea and sent them adrift. As day after day passed without our being able to make known our situation, we grew very anxious; our own prospects were threatening, and how alarmed our friends at home must be! We pictured them to ourselves as searching daily for intelligence, and sadly uttering, "No tidings of the *Megæra*!" At the end of three weeks the captain deemed it expedient to reduce the allowance of food, since no one could tell how long it might have to last. Four ounces of biscuit, half-a-pound of salt or preserved meat, no flour, a quarter of an ounce of tea for four days, and a very little sugar—this was the new rate of provision. But we had cocoa every other day, and the fish we caught was allotted, a pound to a man, as far as it would go. But during bad weather very few fish were caught. Lime-juice was served out every other day while it lasted.

It was on the 16th of July, just a month after we reached St. Paul's, that we at last succeeded in attracting the notice of a passing vessel. The *Aurora*, a Dutch ship, bound from Amsterdam to Batavia, was at some distance from St. Paul's, when some one, viewing the isle through a glass, declared he could see a tree growing on the summit of the crater, whereas it was known that no tree existed there. To investigate this phenomenon the *Aurora* stood in nearer, and made out the flagstaff and reversed ensign. Upon this she shortened sail and came close in, and the life-boat, carrying Lieutenant Jones, got alongside of her. He went on

board, and soon told our tale, and the life-boat returned with an offer to our captain to do anything he wished. Through some misunderstanding, however, before he could go off to arrange anything, the ship set sail and departed. It was late in the evening, and we thought she had gone for the night only, and looked for her all next day, but she never returned. Lieutenant Jones had been detailed for the special duty of endeavouring to communicate with any passing ship, and had the letter-bag always in his charge; but the long time during which he had been unsuccessful in his object had induced many to withdraw their letters in order to add later accounts, and the captain had taken out his despatches for the same reason. We now felt more easy as to our own future, and began to make calculations as to the time which must elapse before help could reach us, endeavouring to be very prudent and moderate in our anticipations. The men looked hungry and wolfish, and suffered much from cold, which was *not* surprising, for the thermometer stood at 42°, and we had no fires. Some would go to bed at five o'clock, because "there was nothing else to do;" and others would reply to the cheery inquiry of the captain, "Well, how are you all?" with "Weakerer and weakerer every day, sir!" The air, somehow, was very provocative of appetite, and we all felt we could have eaten more, instead of less, than our usual allowance. All were kept at work, as there was plenty to do: divers, with a party of men, were continually employed saving stores from the wreck, which had then to be conveyed on shore and housed. Many of the bales were quite spoilt, but others, after being opened and dried, were none the worse, and were carefully stored away, new sheds being built to cover them. Our spades and picks needed constant repair, so did the boats, and fishing-rods were manufactured from rocket-sticks and split boards. The esplanade took a long time making; great boulders, which strewed the side of the hill, had to be moved out of the way and arranged as a border, but we were proud of the result, and when the band played there on fine evenings, we tried to fancy ourselves at some fashionable seaside resort. Then we made preparations for the re-embarkation of the stores, getting ready cranes, windlasses, &c., that there might be no delay when the ship should come to take us off. With all this, it was yet difficult to keep up our spirits; we could not resume the entertainments for the men which took place in the early part of the voyage, for there was no room large enough for them to meet under cover, and the weather would not allow of open-air amusements. Every morning the men were all mustered for inspection, the captain read prayers, and then all were told off in parties for various employments. On August 5th, another Dutch ship was sighted, and put in to know if we needed anything. Two of our passengers, officers going out to Australia on surveying duty, and a paymaster who was ill, were ordered to take passage in her to Batavia, whither she was bound; and the captain also sent on board a number of supernumerary boys, whom we had been taking out. These boys had lost their kits; but a subscription

was got up to furnish them with necessaries. The weather was rough as usual, and the cutter was nearly stove in while alongside the Dutchman ; she had to return in a hurry to shore, without the officer in charge, a middy, being able to jump into her ; and he was carried off to Batavia as he was, in his rough working clothes, and without any baggage. This ship also took the captain's despatches and letters. It was now certain that our position would be made known to the world, and succour sent —so we were not so anxious to communicate with ships. However, some time later another came in—English, and bound for Australia. She gave us some flour, and even offered to take us all on board ; but would have had to throw half her coals into the sea to make room ; and, as we had every reason to suppose arrangements had already been made for our relief, the bargain was not completed.

The old hull of the *Megæra* had not yet broken up ; but we had used her decks and most of the wooden fittings for the protection of stores, and for firewood. While the carpenters were taking these away, they discovered fresh proof of the thin and worn state of her plates, for they could "easily break through them by tapping with the pointed end of their hammers."

At last, on the 26th of August, a steamer was noticed standing in ; and as soon as she was near enough, a boat put off. We all crowded down to the shore, greatly excited, and anxious to know whether her arrival betokened the success of our messengers to Batavia in obtaining help. "Who was the officer standing up in the stern ? Did we recognize him, or were we mistaken ?" It seemed hours before, in answer to the captain's hail, we heard Lieut. Jones's voice, "It is I, sir !" Then the cheering broke out, caps were thrown in the air, and, for a time, we all went crazy with delight. The news spread like wildfire—ships were soon coming to carry us away, our Robinson Crusoe life was ended, our friends at home had heard of our safety, and there was no more need of short allowance. The *Oberon* only brought us provisions—flour, biscuits, sugar, tea, yams, pumpkins, and onions. We were once more on full rations, though the cost of the supply was enough to make authorities look grave. But she also brought relief to our minds, by intelligence that we might expect H.M.S. *Rinaldo* in a few days, and that the *Malacca*, a large boat belonging the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Company, was on her way, chartered to convey all of us on to Australia. The *Oberon* only remained long enough to land the provisions she brought for us, and continued her voyage next day to England. We had plenty to do, packing up our possessions, and getting all ready to depart. Not that our property was very valuable, for very much was spoilt ; and as to our clothes, their condition was such that we should not be able to show ourselves as great swells among the colonists.

The *Rinaldo* was the next to arrive ; she came on the 29th, but went away again for the night, avoiding the dangerous coast. The *Malacca* came on the 30th. Bad luck attended us to the end. On the 2nd of

September, before more than half the men had embarked, it came on to blow. We arrived in a storm, and were destined to depart in a storm. The captain sent to warn the *Malacca* it was unsafe to remain at anchor, and his wisdom was soon evident. The *Rinaldo* was already out of sight, and ere the *Malacca* could get clear away, she nearly followed the example of the *Megæra*. Our experience was repeated; she lost anchor after anchor, her boats were damaged, and both ship and men sustained many injuries before she got fairly away from the island, and disappeared in the distance. There were we "left lamenting;" but we knew well enough we were not deserted, although our chances of a speedy embarkation were vanishing. On the 3rd, the storm redoubled its fury. Nothing could be seen of the friendly vessels, nor, indeed, could we wish to see them—the further off the safer for them. In the evening, an alarm was raised that the boats were adrift, broken loose from their moorings, and we turned out a party to secure them. While so engaged, immense waves came rolling in; they broke higher up than the sea had ever reached before, pouring over the breakwater, and filling a hut in which four of the men were sleeping. Roused up so suddenly, and in the dark, it was some time before they could unfasten the door, which was secured by rope; and when they at last managed to get it open, they had to make their escape through water breast high. Amidst the noise of the elements, the howling of the wind, and the roaring of the waves, a crash was heard, which attracted our attention to the old ship: she had parted in the middle. For a time the forepart held up, supported by the fore-mast and yard; but, presently, that also broke up into three pieces, and the bow, straining and swaying, split asunder, and fell over into the sea. The rollers were sweeping in with such force that they actually carried parts of the wreck over the bar and into the basin. Next morning, the shore presented a scene of wild devastation; the esplanade, which we had formed with such care, was destroyed; the great boulders, which had required many men to move, had been washed some yards further up the hill; the pier was carried away, and large pieces of the masts, spars, and sides of the ship were floating in. The poor old *Megæra* was a melancholy spectacle; canted over on the rocks, with her ribs showing, she was evidently determined not to survive our departure. The sailors narrated a highly apocryphal legend: how the evil demon who possessed her had appeared in blue light, and flames shot up from her hold before she broke in half! When the storm abated, the *Malacca* returned; but her commander sent in a grievous report of the damage done to her in the gales, remonstrating strongly against any attempt to embark the stores. She had but one anchor left; and, if anything happened to that; what could she do when she reached the port in Australia? It seemed too great a risk, and the captain was compelled to yield. He made, therefore, a formal arrangement with the two Frenchmen, the inhabitants of the island—to take charge of the stores—until such time as the Government at home should signify its pleasure as to the ultimate dis-

posal of them. The Frenchmen were very sorry to lose us, and no wonder. Our sojourn on the island for nearly three months, with the bustle and excitement of our camp life and operations, and the society of the blue-jackets, must have been a very agreeable interlude in the monotony of their existence; more amusing than the companionship of penguins and rats, and more stirring than the routine of their ordinary occupations, fishing, hunting, and examining their small dominion. St. Paul's is only two and three quarter miles in length by one and a half in breadth.

The *Rinaldo* was to have conveyed Captain Thrupp and the witnesses accompanying him to Singapore, whence they were ordered to proceed to England for the court-martial. She reappeared on the morning of September 5, but was unable to approach the island. She signalled to ask if they could embark at once—but it was impossible. We had but one boat left, and that could not have got so far out to sea safely. We signalled to her to meet us at King George's Sound, where she would have to coal, and then bade farewell to our desert home, and rowed out to the *Malacea*. The captain was the last to leave the shore, as he had been the last to quit the *Megæra*. As soon as he was on board we set sail, and started for King George's Sound, with no great demonstrations of grief at quitting the island, but rather the reverse. We were very well treated on board the *Malacea*, and reached our destination, without further misadventure, in time to intercept the mail from Australia to England—so that the party going home would arrive there sooner than if they had gone in the *Rinaldo*. I think we all regretted the parting: our misfortunes had only drawn us more together, and a thoroughly good understanding existed between officers and men. And surely, under God, we owed it to good management that not one comrade's life was lost—not one grave was left on the desolate island!

Solum Sola.

A DIALOGUE.

INTRODUCTION.

MILICENT was the beauty of the party, though Susan's friends never thought Susan nearly so plain as she thought herself; certainly not Mr. Shephard, so far as appearances went, for his devotion to her, favoured by chance, made Henry —— jealously silent and disagreeable. They had all held the feast on the Brisons rock off the head of Cape Cornwall, in sight of Land's End; but at a spot where the coast differs, for the granite columns of that noble promontory have given place to broken walls of rock and turf slopes rich as a Persian carpet with golden furze and purple heather. The tide rose fast that afternoon as the punt took the party off in detachments, and Susan and Henry were left together, he looking over the hazy horizon, in a last hope to discover the Scillies, she at work on a half-finished sketch. When Susan's brother would have put the boat back once more to fetch them a sudden Atlantic ground-swell had already set in. The boat was flat and low built; and though the one kept in Whitesand Bay, below Sennen, would have easily breasted the rollers, it was agreed, with some laughter, that the afternoon was fine, Sennen too far distant, and altogether the pair might be left, two together, for six hours,—when William should return and fetch them off. This conclusion was shouted or signalled from shore, and he and she abandoned to their own resources.

She (after a little laugh). Well, we are prisoners together against our will : I shall look to your cleverness to make it bearable.

He. All I can, of course ; but you know quite well how limited my powers are in that direction.

S. Indeed. I expect you to prove the contrary. You must not expect to get off under colour of modesty and compliments. I expect you to talk your best, and not to think it wasted. I know your notions about us—about our sex, I mean : don't fancy them a secret ; they ooze out and come to my ears, you can't tell how.

H. Whatever my poor notions may be, I am sure, at least, they can be nothing—

S. There, you have made your bow : if I could move without disturbing myself, I would bow too. Imagine yourself morally curtseyed to, and begin to be amusing.

H. The best I can in such depressing circumstances. All I am afraid of—I mean what I am afraid of now—is that commonplace thing the weather. There is not a hint of cavern on our island, and the cloud over the S.W. looks severe.

S. Meanwhile, it is a capital line to break my horizon. Look: if you do not disturb me, I mean to make a perfect panorama before the tide falls. I think I shall exhibit it: the World seen from the Land's End. That would be a taking title, would it not?

H. With your own fair self brilliantly in the foreground, I trust. Will you give me a little space, too? Pray do.

S. Depends on how you behave yourself.

H. I will put on my most romantic attitude. Well, I see you are determined to be serious now, by that little sea of green and blue you are mixing so energetically—a perfect storm in a saucer—Turner himself could not have done it more powerfully.

S. Do not be too terribly sarcastic. I know quite well how poor a girl's work is. We all must draw or play, you know; there is no escape. I suppose it is for the best, like everything else, but it is so monotonous.

H. All I have to say is, why, then, do it?

S. Oh, why do it, of course; as if you did not know we must, especially if we are not brilliant beauties. We cannot help ourselves as you can, with all your out-of-door amusements, and then your real occupations and work, that is, those who are not so idle as you are, spending the morning in being very agreeable and amusing to everybody in general, and Miss—— as you look so profoundly anxious, I will disappoint you—in particular. Any Miss, I mean; and then wasting all the six hours now, whilst I am hard at work on my masterpiece. Do not look displeased,—a gentleman always looks foolish, excuse me, when he looks displeased; that is one of our privileges, and in these bad days, when young ladies do not sell for half their value, I mean to stand up boldly for them all. Let us be reasonable, now; it is half-past four, and quite time for it.

H. I perfectly agree; I have been wishing to be so all through, though, very probably, you did not discover it. It was pleasant enough this morning; and I did think I learned something, too, as, you know, one always should learn; and so I am ready to be reasonable, and talk as one should when the hour of champagne and chicken is over, and the philosophizing on the result begins.

S. Am I to hear the result, then?

H. I do not know whether exactly. Is it not curious, though, how unfavourably, on the whole, society is managed for what one would fancy its special purpose—really pleasant open talk, especially between young people of the same age, if I may give my own years that pleasing interpretation in face of most of our own fair companions. At a ball everything is so much broken up; and, even at an out-of-door party, the accidents of neighbourhood and carriage-packing as one starts, or the

narrowness of the lanes afterwards, are terribly against the free choice of companions, without which one never talks well or openly.

S. I think you are hard on society and its arrangements. I don't say so because they are so much settled by women, but these little moments of meeting you quarrel with bring out very pleasant sayings, little pearls of talk, I think; and I do not believe we ought to find it difficult to talk with a chance companion. I am sure to-day every one seemed well pleased, except, of course, poor Miss Millicent, with that dull young curate, after he had announced his engagement in Wiltshire so funnily when we were to be taken downstairs. "Are you engaged, Mr. Boulton?" I shall never forget how my aunt looked at the solemn satisfaction of his reply.

H. I always fancy that such matters should be proclaimed at once, to prevent mistakes, especially in case of girls. It would save much annoyance, perhaps, to both parties—perhaps not always to both.

S. Now, remember we are to be reasonable—and very reasonable.

H. Well, talking of reasonable, so far from pitying poor Miss Millicent, as you good-naturedly call her, I thought hers a rather enviable position. It is so far easier—at least, I find it so—to talk frankly to a young lady who is engaged, or fixed, let us call it: in that sense, it is the engaged who are the engaging. Except, perhaps; if it be a first cousin, or one's intended's sister (and not always to them), I fancy I can never be quite "reasonable," in the full force, to a young lady. There is a sufficiently frank confession, which I must leave to your interpretation. By the way, if you happened to have a second pencil, I would like to try my hand at a sketch also. The blank leaf at the end of my book would do quite well.

S. I think I can. Here is the one Mr. Shephard gave me, when mine was lost at the charade-writing; but I found it lying hid in the basket afterwards. I don't think it a very good one, so it is not a valuable gift. I think, I mean, it is one of those made-up leads which they often sell now. Surely, what you were saying is a confession of male awkwardness and false shame. I don't say *mauvaise honte*, because I dislike French in English.

H. So do I. I have—what should I say? I have a *mauvaise honte* against it.

S. You shall not escape under cover of little jokes. I maintain that girls are more natural, less affected, than men, when sex meets sex—that they are not under this constant consciousness of—if you know what I mean.

H. Of possible matrimony.

S. Rather violently put. I am sure there is in it a lurking sarcasm, a suspicion of *Vanity Fair* and the marriage-market. Confess now, Henry, were you not thinking of Ethel Newcome and her green ticket at the Water-Colour Exhibition?

H. Not the old story of Thackeray *versus* Woman, please, Susan; if you—oh, no, there is far more freshness, and natural feeling, and pure, natural, amiable silliness, too, in life than the great novelist allows for.

Some girls marry for preference, some for folly, some, I am sure, even for love. That little quick stroke on your horizon means disapproval, I know; many, perhaps, you think I should say.

S. Honestly, many.

H. Stop, let me pick up your verbena ; I see it is the one which was given you with the pencil.

S. And that is no reason why it should be torn to bits ; no, it is no use to me now ; but a gift is always a kindness.

H. An expectation of kindness, perhaps. You treat us better, truly, than we deserve. I fear that old saying is true, that man is a selfish creature in all these matters.

S. I shall take that for *amende honorable* for your saucy speeches. You were laughing quietly at me, I know, just now, because I said I disliked to use French words whilst I was using them. Will you not carry your liberality a little further, and allow that we are as logical as you ? I like you best when you are liberal.

H. Thanks ; but why am I to allow this, now in particular ?

S. Because, a little while since, it was that women marry for money (with a little saving clause for silliness), which, I suppose, if anything, would be sheer selfishness ; and now you have put men on the selfish square of the board also. Are both and all selfish, or should we say that neither are ? I am sure I think so.

H. You are young, sister Susan. I won't dispute with you about girls ; but heaven knows as to men—and heaven happily hides it from you, dear, at present.

S. What exactly do you mean by selfishness ?

H. We must all, in one sense, care for ourselves—indeed, care more for self than any one else. All that I give in, and I am sure your quickness will not require one to ring the changes on that sort of sophistry which ends in calling the best people the most truly selfish. No ; I may sum it up in the true bad sense by one word. I give you three guesses at it.

S. Oh, no ; I am not really quick at guessing. Please say it, and put me out of my pain.

H. In one word—coldness ; but why out of your pain ?

S. Because I thought it might prove some pet quality of mine.

H. I trust not. But coldness is selfishness, and there is none other. I did not feel this for many years. When at last I saw it, it was I know not whether most pain or interest to me : it lighted up and explained so many perplexities in life ; but then it was truly the saddest of discoveries.

S. One thing that strikes me is, you seem to make selfishness, which is so bad and so wrong, not so much so ; I mean, people can hardly help being cold. I hope one can help being selfish.

H. Ah, I see I have hit on a wrong subject. Ethics and metaphysics for girls—how horrid, how dull !

S. Please do for once pay the compliment of thinking me fit to hear

what, I suppose, men say to men—if it be a compliment. I really wish to learn.

An unlesson'd girl, unschool'd, unpractised,
Happy in this—she is not yet so old
But she may learn.

Besides, such a great man as you, when you are reasonable, may be allowed a little dulness, especially on a desert rock, and no escape.

H. I put it thus: if coldness be a thing in the blood, so are our other faults, too, and to the same degree. The good and the less good run in us, no doubt, from childhood; but as one side or the other is strengthened and brought out, we grow up to shame or to beauty.

S. I fear it is not so easy to grow up to beauty.

H. You must not say so to me, Susan, who have known you so long, and seen you grow up. I should have thought it very easy. Let me look: how steadily you get on with your work! The view is all coming together, as artists say.

S. Look. I think you should be very cautious, however, how you judge people cold, and so, selfish; may I say so to you? Often, perhaps, what seems such is only reserve or timidity—a very commonplace remark, I fear; but I really believe it is so. So many things in our life and way of education prevent us from showing ourselves as we are. I daresay you will laugh, and call it a girl's vanity, but I am sure a feeling of want of grace and charm often looks like coldness. Remember how terrible it would be to find we had cared and believed in—had cared, and there was nothing on the other side like it. Really, I think, after one such discovery—no, it ought not to make such a difference; but perhaps it might to some persons.

H. Nor dare, when once misunderstood,
To sympathize again,

S. Oh, what pretty lines. I am sure he or she who wrote them must have felt truly. I am sure it was a woman.

H. True feeling is of no sex, or, rather, of both at once. But I see the truth of what you say about reserve. I daresay one should make more allowance for it, especially with girls, and let theories go by. Let me see the drawing again; may I look over as you work? I daresay you have a moral everywhere in it, Susan; you know all young ladies' novelettes have a moral. What is the meaning of that yellowish gleam over the sea-line?

S. Hope—if you will have one.

H. Hope should be green, however. I do not mean a play on the word, Susan.

S. Why, then, put on the cap? I am sure I should not have suspected you.

H. Well, well, I know you are above the suspicion of slang.

S. I have not done, however, I assure you; I am so annoyed at your

mockery, laughing in your sleeve at my little romantic remark, as you thought it.

H. Indeed, I was quite innocent.

S. Do not say so. Whenever a woman says anything at all poetical a man is always ready to turn it back with some idle joke ; he never seems to believe that we are serious, and yet you are perpetually accusing us of frivolity. We have quicker and warmer feelings than you, and like to believe in what we are saying or doing, and then you break in and require us to be silly,—act up to your ideal of a girl, I suppose,—and then condemn us for doing so ! What have you to say to this ?

H. I like hearing you talk so much !

S. Oh, you may sometimes be much the better for it ! But, seriously, —well, I daresay our seriousness and romance are not very lasting ; they would fatigue if they were ; but they are real, indeed, whilst they last.

H. How neat it would be to say, women's romance is seriousness, and her seriousness is romance. But do not think it is I who say so.

S. Or think it either, I hope.

H. Nor think it. Something prettier might be fancied. I do not claim for my sex more truth or strength in feeling, but I suppose men take in a larger space in what they feel,—have more of a before and after, in Shakspeare's words,—and perhaps can hence bear more readily to look at the ironical side of their own romance. It is dangerous, no doubt, to do this ; is it not dangerous, too, not to do it ?

S. I was thinking—

H. What ?

S. Do not let me interrupt you.

H. (*after a silence.*) Might we not say something, as thus :—Two fairies stood by the boy at his birth ; and when the father asked what gifts they brought to soften the daily fret and pains of life, one said : “I will show him visions of old days so gorgeous and so grand that he will be carried away by them, and forget the petty evils of the hour in the contemplation.” And the other : “If this be not enough, I will fill him with hopes of the coming. He will see duty and toil and a crown, war and triumph and glory on the horizon, and these things also will draw him out of the immediate.” But the mother smiled as they spoke ; and when the child grew up, and met the common fortunes of every day with its little smiles and tears, neither the splendours of what had been nor the visions of what would be were sufficient to give him peace. And then came another fairy, bringing the girl in her arms, and saying : “Two spirits endowed the boy, but I alone am enough to bless this little one. They gave him lordship over the past and the future, but she shall be genius of the present. The others will stand by and support her, but she is the life and reality that unites them.

S. But what she unites them in is but for a moment, I fear—a meeting-point, as people say, between the two eternities.

H. We will not press the figure too far, Susan : so we must live,

and so accept it. When I saw the children together yesterday, whilst they were kept in by the rain, and your Mary and little Charley Wills drawing together, it reminded me of our old days, when it used to be such delight to us to make opposition scrawls, and write verses—such verses, too!—on the two little steamers, the *Wave* and the *Lily*, which then ran alternately between Cowes and Southampton, and had the honour of conveying us on those wonderful excursions to Carisbrook. It seemed to us then the most important thing of our lives which could describe the wreck or burning of the rival boat in the most downright lines; and you cried when I ended my poem one day with, “Down went the *Lily*, so like her, so silly, silly.”

S. We were little dunces, I think, then; and, perhaps, not quite free from all touch of it since. Let me have the paper again—it is altering so fast in my foreground. Look at that great flat stone, it was only a ripple before, and now it is all uncovered.

H. I wondered if to the children of yesterday their game was as much as ours to us. I could hardly believe it, they were so childish.

S. I am afraid you have grown too much a man now, with your law experiences. Don’t you feel something old—no, I won’t say old, oldish, coming over you?

H. I hope not. I am sure not, not at least—

S. Ah! here they are. Please help me to get my things together. How fast the ebb has come.

H. Yes—and it will presently be flood again. These are some lines I wrote the other day—a little poem, in fact—

S. Don’t be ashamed!

H. May I read them to you, Susan? There will just be time.

THE QUESTION.

It is no fault of the loved one,
If I cannot discover
Whether my heart be worthy
To be the heart of her lover.
It is no blot on her beauty
That makes me wonder and waver,
If to fly the might of her magic,
Or ask the seal of her favour.

O star-drop of liquid silver
That quivers and flames in the zenith!
Say, what is this entrancement,
Or what this misery meaneth?
The sapphire spaces about thee
With the light of thy looks thou palest:
What art thou in thine own heavens,
If here thou so prevailest?

Must the spaces that part us
Still spread darker and wider?
Can she stoop from her splendour,
Stoop, and set me beside her?

Can I climb to her beauty,
My star with glory above her?
Or is she too high in heaven
For me to take her and love her?

—Well?

S. Very well! But, perhaps luckily for you, I fear there is no time for criticism. I hear something like oars.

H. It is only your brother, who has brought the punt over—how small he looks below. Susan, we have not had half our talk out, I do think. I am sure it has been very pleasant to me to try to be reasonable, as you said.

S. And to me to see you so.

H. Continuations and renewals are a risk, only accidents do not come every day.

S. We must hope not.

H. I thought, perhaps, we might hold another talk in the chancel of the ruin to-morrow, if the day be fine enough for you to go on with your other sketch.

S. Oh! very pleasant, no doubt. But I am certain I shall not be there.

H. And I that I shall.

FINALE.

It is curious that he had the last word. But so it was: and then they went back, laughing and talking of common things, and next day the skies were clear and the sun ruddily glowing, for it was autumn, and the grey priory walls and the turf, mounded softly within the ruined chancel, slept in the sunbeams, and all was in absolute silence, except when the wild bees sang in full flight, as they curved and darted over the russet thyme-tufts. But about mid-day came quick steps, and happy cries, and voices of thoughtless glee, and the children from the house, dividing into two little bands on either side the priory field, tried which should first climb through the hazel-bushes into the chancel. Now the shouts grew merrier and more panting, as they forced their way into the underwood, when suddenly on each side came a louder, an almost frightened, scream, then louder and more delighted laughter, and with cries, "Here is Henry!" and "Here is Susan!" forgetting the race, the children drew them in triumph within the chancel. The children said, "We must dance a fairy dance round you, as you frightened us, before we go in. You must join hands here." And they did so.

Lord Kilgobbin.

CHAPTER LX.

"A DEFEAT."



ECIL WALPOLE'S Italian experiences had supplied him with an Italian proverb, which says, "Tutto il mal non vien per nuocere," or, in other words, that no evil comes unmixed with good; and there is a marvellous amount of wisdom in the adage.

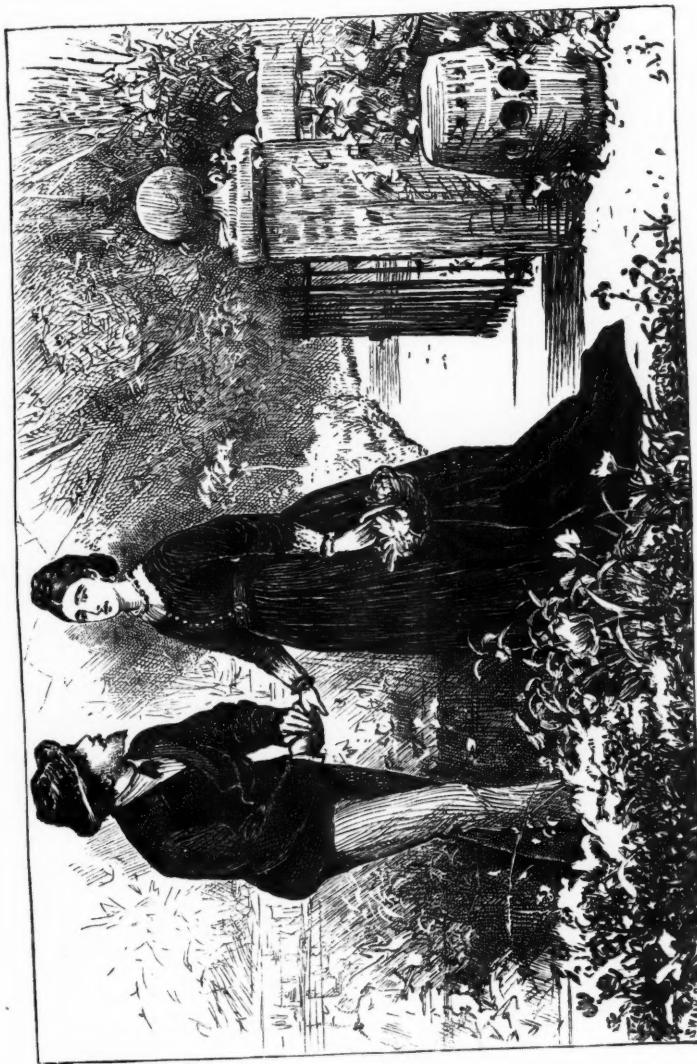
That there is a deep philosophy, too, in showing how carefully we should sift misfortune to the dregs, and ascertain what of benefit we might rescue from the dross, is not to be denied; and the more we reflect on it, the more should we see that the germ of all real consolation is intimately bound up in this reservation.

No sooner, then, did Walpole, in novelist phrase, "realize the fact"

that he was to go to Guatemala, than he set very practically to inquire what advantages, if any, could be squeezed out of this unpromising incident.

The creditors—and he had some—would not like it! The dreary process of dunning a man across half the globe, the hopelessness of appeals that took two months to come to hand, and the inefficacy of threats that were wafted over miles of ocean! And certainly he smiled as he thought of these, and rather maliciously bethought him of the truculent importunity that menaced him with some form of publicity in the more insolent appeal to some Minister at home. "Our tailor will moderate his language, our jeweller will appreciate the merits of polite letter-writing," thought he. "A few parallels of latitude become a great schoolmaster."

But there were greater advantages even than these. This banishment—for it was nothing less—could not by possibility be persisted in, and if Lady Mandeville should consent to accompany him, would be very short-lived.



"I SHOULD LIKE TO HAVE BACK MY LETTERS."

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"The women will take it up," said he, "and with that charming clanship that distinguishes them, will lead the Foreign Secretary a life of misery, till he gives us something better. 'Maude says the thermometer has never been lower than 132 deg., and that there is no shade. The nights have no breeze, and are rather hotter than the days. She objects seriously to be waited on by people in feathers, and very few of them, and she remonstrates against alligators in the kitchen-garden, and wild-cats coming after the canaries in the drawing-room.'

"I hear the catalogue of misfortunes, which begins with nothing to eat, *plus* the terror of being eaten. I recognize the lament over lost civilization and a wasted life, and I see Downing Street besieged with ladies in deputations, declaring that they care nothing for party or politics, but a great deal for the life of a dear young creature, who is to be sacrificed to appease some people belonging to the existing Ministry. I think I know how beautifully illogical they will be, but how necessarily successful; and now for Maude herself."

Of Lady Maude Bickerstaff Walpole had seen next to nothing since his return; his own ill-health had confined him to his room, and her inquiries after him had been cold and formal; and though he wrote a tender little note and asked for books, slyly hinting what measure of bliss a five minutes' visit would confer on him, the books he begged for were sent, but not a line of answer accompanied them. On the whole, he did not dislike this little show of resentment. What he really dreaded was indifference. So long as a woman is piqued with you, something can always be done; it is only when she becomes careless and unmindful of what you do or say, or look or think, that the game looks hopeless. Therefore it was that he regarded this demonstration of anger as rather favourable than otherwise.

"Atlee has told her of the Greek! Atlee has stirred up her jealousy of the Titian Girl. Atlee has drawn a long indictment against me, and the fellow has done me good service in giving me something to plead to. Let me have a charge to meet and I have no misgivings. What really unmans me is the distrust that will not even utter an allegation, and the indifference that does not want disproof."

He learned that her ladyship was in the garden, and he hastened down to meet her. In his own small way Walpole was a clever tactician; and he counted much on the ardour with which he should open his case and the amount of impetuosity that would give her very little time for reflection.

"I shall at once assume that her fate is irrevocably knitted to my own, and I shall act as though the tie was indissoluble. After all, if she puts me to the proof, I have her letters—cold and guarded enough, it is true. No fervour, no gush of any kind, but calm dissertations on a future that must come, and a certain dignified acceptance of her own part in it. Not the kind of letters that a Q. C. could read with much rapture before a crowded court, and ask the assembled grocers, 'What

happiness has life to offer to the man robbed of those precious pledges of affection—how was he to face the world, stripped of every attribute that cherished hope and fed ambition ? ”

He was walking slowly towards her when he first saw her, and he had some seconds to prepare himself ere they met.

“ I came down after you, Maude,” said he, in a voice ingeniously modulated between the tone of old intimacy and a slight suspicion of emotion. “ I came down to tell you my news”—he waited, and then added —“ my fate ! ”

Still she was silent, the changed word exciting no more interest than its predecessor.

“ Feeling as I do,” he went on, “ and how we stand towards each other, I cannot but know that my destiny has nothing of good or evil in it, except as it contributes to your happiness.” He stole a glance at her, but there was nothing in that cold calm face that could guide him. With a bold effort, however, he went on : “ My own fortune in life has but one test—is my existence to be shared with you or not ? With your hand in mine, Maude”—and he grasped the marble-cold fingers as he spoke—“ poverty, exile, hardships, and the world’s neglect, have no terrors for me. With your love, every ambition of my heart is gratified. Without it—”

“ Well, without it—what ? ” said she, with a faint smile. *

“ You would not torture me by such a doubt ? Would you rack my soul by a misery I have not words to speak of ? ”

“ I thought you were going to say what it might be, when I stopped you.”

“ Oh, drop this cold and bantering tone, dearest Maude. Remember the question is now of my very life itself. If you cannot be affectionate, at least be reasonable ! ”

“ I shall try,” said she calmly.

Stung to the quick by a composure which he could not imitate, he was able, however, to repress every show of anger, and with a manner cold and measured as her own, he went on :—“ My lord advises that I should go back to diplomacy, and has asked the Ministry to give me Guatemala. It is nothing very splendid. It is far away in a remote part of the world; not over-well paid, but at least I shall be Chargé-d’Affaires, and by three years,—four, at most, of this banishment—I shall have a claim for something better.”

“ I hope you may, I’m sure,” said she, as he seemed to expect something like a remark.

“ That is not enough, Maude, if the hope be not a wish—and a wish that includes self-interest.”

“ I am so dull, Cecil : tell me what you mean ? ”

“ Simply this, then : does your heart tell you that you could share this fortune, and brave these hardships : in one word, will you say what will make me regard this fate as the happiest of my existence ? will you give

me this dear hand as my own,—my own ?" and he pressed his lips upon it rapturously as he spoke.

She made no effort to release her hand; nor for a second or two did she say one word. At last, in a very measured tone she said:—"I should like to have back my letters."

"Your letters? Do you mean, Maude, that—that you would break with me?"

"I mean certainly that I should not go to this horrid place——"

"Then I shall refuse it," broke he in impetuously.

"Not that only, Cecil," said she, for the first time faltering; "but except being very good friends, I do not desire that there should be more between us."

"No engagement?"

"No, no engagement. I do not believe there ever was an actual promise, at least on my part. Other people had no right to promise for either of us—and—and, in fact, the present is a good opportunity to end it."

"To end it," echoed he, in intense bitterness; "to end it?"

"And I should like to have my letters," said she calmly, while she took some freshly plucked flowers from a basket on her arm, and appeared to seek for something at the bottom of the basket.

"I thought you would come down here, Cecil," said she, "when you had spoken to my uncle. Indeed, I was sure you would, and so I brought these with me." And she drew forth a somewhat thick bundle of notes and letters tied with a narrow ribbon. "These are yours," said she, handing them.

Far more piqued by her cold self-possession than really wounded in feeling, he took the packet without a word; at last he said: "This is your own wish—your own, unprompted by others?"

She stared almost insolently at him for answer.

"I mean, Maude,—oh, forgive me if I utter that dear name once more—I mean there has been no influence used to make you treat me thus?"

"You have known me to very little purpose all these years, Cecil Walpole, to ask me such a question."

"I am not sure of that. I know too well what misrepresentation and calumny can do anywhere; and I have been involved in certain difficulties which, if not explained away, might be made accusations—grave accusations."

"I make none—I listen to none."

"I have become an object of complete indifference, then? You feel no interest in me either way? If I dared, Maude, I should like to ask the date of this change—when it began?"

"I don't well know what you mean. There was not, so far as I am aware, anything between us, except a certain esteem and respect, of which convenience was to make something more. Now convenience has broken

faith with us, but we are not the less very good friends—excellent friends if you like."

"Excellent friends! I could swear to the friendship!" said he, with a malicious energy.

"So at least I mean to be," said she calmly.

"I hope it is not I shall fail in the compact. And now will my quality of friend entitle me to ask one question, Maude?"

"I am not sure till I hear it."

"I might have hoped a better opinion of my discretion; at all events I will risk my question. What I would ask is, how far Joseph Atlee is mixed up with your judgment of me? Will you tell me this?"

"I will only tell you, sir, that you are over-vain of that discretion you believe you possess."

"Then I am right," cried he, almost insolently. "I *have* hit the blot."

A glance, a mere glance of haughty disdain, was the only reply she made.

"I am shocked, Maude," said he at last. "I am ashamed that we should spend in this way perhaps the very last few minutes we shall ever pass together. Heart-broken as I am, I should desire to carry away one memory at least of her whose love was the load-star of my existence."

"I want my letters, Cecil," said she, coldly.

"So that you came down here with mine, prepared for this rupture, Maude? It was all pre-arranged in your mind?"

"More discretion, more discretion, or good taste—which is it?"

"I ask pardon, most humbly I ask it; your rebuke was quite just. I was presuming upon a past which has no relation to the present. I shall not offend any more. And now, what was it you said?"

"I want my letters."

"They are here," said he, drawing a thick envelope fully crammed with letters from his pocket and placing it in her hand. "Scarcely as carefully or as nicely kept as mine, for they have been read over too many times; and with what rapture, Maude. How pressed to my heart and to my lips, how treasured! Shall I tell you?"

There was that of exaggerated passion—almost rant—in these last words, that certainly did not impress them with reality; and either Lady Maude was right in doubting their sincerity, or cruelly unjust: for she smiled faintly as she heard them.

"No, don't tell me," said she, faintly. "I am already so much flattered by a courteous anticipation of my wishes that I ask for nothing more."

He bowed his head lowly; but his smile was one of triumph, as he thought how, this time at least, he had wounded her.

"There are some trinkets, Cecil," said she, coldly, "which I have made into a packet, and you will find them on your dressing-table. And—

it may save you some discomfort if I say that you need not give yourself trouble to recover a little ring with an opal I once gave you, for I have it now."

" May I dare ? "

" You may not dare. Good-by." And she gave her hand ; he bent over it for a moment, scarcely touched it with his lips, and turned away.

CHAPTER LXI.

A "CHANGE OF FRONT."

OF all the discomfitures in life there was one which Cecil Walpole did not believe could possibly befall him. Indeed, if it could have been made a matter of betting, he would have wagered all he had in the world that no woman should ever be able to say she refused his offer of marriage.

He had canvassed the matter very often with himself, and always arrived at the same conclusion—that if a man were not a mere coxcomb, blinded by vanity and self-esteem, he could always know how a woman really felt towards him ; and that where the question admitted of a doubt—where, indeed, there was even a flaw in the absolute certainty—no man with a due sense of what was owing to himself would risk his dignity by the possibility of a refusal. It was a part of his peculiar ethics that a man thus rejected was damaged, pretty much as a bill that has been denied acceptance. It was the same wound to credit, the same outrage on character. Considering, therefore, that nothing obliged a man to make an offer of his hand till he had assured himself of success, it was to his thinking a mere gratuitous pursuit of insult to be refused. That no especial delicacy kept these things secret, that women talked of them freely—ay, triumphantly—that they made the staple of conversation at afternoon tea and the club, with all the flippant comments that dear friends know how to contribute as to your vanity and presumption, he was well aware. Indeed, he had been long an eloquent contributor to that scandal literature which amuses the leisure of fashion and helps on the tedium of an ordinary dinner. How Lady Maude would report the late scene in the garden to the Countess of Mecherscroft, who would tell it to her company at her country-house !—How the Lady Georginas would discuss it over luncheon, and the Lord Georges talk of it out shooting ! what a host of pleasant anecdotes would be told of his inordinate puppyism and self-esteem ! How even the dullest fellows would dare to throw a stone at him ! What a target for a while he would be for every marksman at any range to shoot at ! All these his quick-witted ingenuity pictured at once before him.

" I see it all," cried he, as he paced his room in self-examination. " I have suffered myself to be carried away by a burst of momentary impulse. I brought up all my reserves, and have failed utterly. Nothing

can save me now, but a ‘change of front.’ It is the last bit of generalship remaining—a change of front—a change of front!’ And he repeated the words over and over, as though hoping they might light up his ingenuity. “I might go and tell her that all I had been saying was mere jest—that I could never have dreamed of asking her to follow me into barbarism: that to go to Guatemala was equivalent to accepting a yellow fever—it was courting disease, perhaps death; that my insistence was a mere mockery, in the worst possible taste; but that I had already agreed with Lord Danesbury, our engagement should be cancelled; that his lordship’s memory of our conversation would corroborate me in saying I had no intention to propose such a sacrifice to her; and indeed I had but provoked her to say the very things, and use the very arguments I had already employed to myself as a sort of aid to my own heartfelt convictions. Here would be a ‘change of front’ with a vengeance.

“She will already have written off the whole interview: the despatch is finished,” cried he, after a moment. “It is a change of front the day after the battle. The people will read of my manœuvre with the bulletin of victory before them.

“Poor Frank Touchet used to say,” cried he aloud, “‘Whenever they refuse my cheques at the Bank, I always transfer my account;’ and fortunately the world is big enough for these tactics for several years. That’s a change of front too, if I knew how to adapt it. I must marry another woman—there’s nothing else for it. It is the only escape; and the question is, who shall she be?” The more he meditated over this change of front the more he saw that his destiny pointed to the Greek. If he could see clearly before him to a high career in diplomacy, the Greek girl, in everything but fortune, would suit him well. Her marvellous beauty, her grace of manner, her social tact, and readiness; her skill in languages, were all the very qualities most in request. Such a woman would make the full complement, by her fascinations, of all that her husband could accomplish by his abilities. The little indiscretions of old men—especially old men—with these women, the lapses of confidence they made them—the dropping admissions of this or that intention, made up what Walpole knew to be high diplomacy.

“Nothing worth hearing is ever got by a man,” was an adage he treasured as deep wisdom. Why kings resort to that watering-place, and accidentally meet certain Ministers going somewhere else; why Kaisers affect to review troops, here, that they may be able to talk statecraft there; how princely compacts and contracts of marriage are made at sulphur springs: all these and such like leaked out as small-talk with a young and pretty woman, whose frivolity of manner went bail for the safety of the confidence, and went far to persuade Walpole, that though Bank stock might be a surer investment, there were paying qualities in certain women, that in the end promised larger returns than mere money and higher rewards than mere wealth. “Yes,” cried he, to himself, “this is the real change of front—this has all in its favour.”

Nor yet all. Strong as Walpole's self-esteem was, and high his estimate of his own capacity, he had—he could not conceal it—a certain misgiving as to whether he really understood that girl or not. "I have watched many a bolt from her bow," said he, "and think I know their range. But now and then she has shot an arrow into the clear sky, and far beyond my sight to follow it."

That scene in the wood too. Absurd enough that it should obtrude itself at such a moment—but it was the sort of indication that meant much more to a man like Walpole than to men of other experiences. Was she flirting with this young Austrian soldier. No great harm if she were; but still there had been passages between himself and her, which should have bound her over to more circumspection. Was there not a shadowy sort of engagement between them? Lawyers deem a mere promise to grant a lease as equivalent to a contract. It would be a curious question in morals to inquire how far the licensed perjuries of courtship are statutory offences. Perhaps a sly consciousness on his own part that he was not playing perfectly fair, made him, as it might do, more than usually tenacious that his adversary should be honest. What chance the innocent public would have with two people who were so adroit with each other, was his next thought; and he actually laughed aloud as it occurred to him. "I only wish my lord would invite us here before we sail. If I could but show her to Maude, half-an-hour of these women together would be the heaviest vengeance I could ask her! I wonder how could that be managed?"

"A despatch, sir, his lordship begs you to read," said a servant, entering. It was an open envelope, and contained these words on a slip of paper:—

"W. shall have Guatemala. He must go out by the mail of November 15. Send him here for instructions." Some words in cypher followed, and an under-secretary's initials.

"Now then for the 'change of front.' I'll write to Nina by this post. I'll ask my lord to let me tear off this portion of the telegram, and I shall enclose it."

The letter was not so easily written as he thought—at least he made more than one draft—and was at last in great doubt whether a long statement or a few and very decided lines might be better. How he ultimately determined, and what he said, cannot be given here: for unhappily, the conditions of my narrative require I should ask my reader to accompany me to a very distant spot and other interests which were just then occupying the attention of an almost forgotten acquaintance of ours, the redoubted Joseph Atlee.

CHAPTER LXII.

WITH A PASHA.

JOSEPH ATLEE had a very busy morning of it on a certain November day at Pera, when the post brought him tidings that Lord Danesbury had resigned the Irish Viceroyalty, and been once more named to his old post as Ambassador at Constantinople.

"My uncle desires me," wrote Lady Maude, "to impress you with the now all-important necessity of obtaining the papers you know of, and, so far as you are able, to secure that no authorised copies of them are extant. Kulbash Pasha will, my lord says, be very tractable when once assured that our return to Turkey is a certainty; but should you detect signs of hesitation or distrust in the Grand Vizier's conduct, you will hint that the investigation as to the issue of the Galatz shares—'preference shares'—may be re-opened at any moment, and that the Ottoman Bank agent, Schäffer, has drawn up a memoir which my uncle now holds. I copy my lord's words for all this, and sincerely hope you will understand it, which, I confess, I do not at all. My lord cautioned me not to occupy your time or attention by any reference to Irish questions, but leave you perfectly free to deal with those larger interests of the East that should now engage you. I forbear, therefore, to do more than mark with a pencil the part in the debates which might interest you especially, and merely add the fact, otherwise, perhaps, not very credible, that Mr. Walpole *did* write the famous letter imputed to him—*did* promise the amnesty, or whatever be the name of it, and *did* pledge the honour of the Government to a transaction with these Fenian leaders. With what success to his own prospects, the *Gazette* will speak that announces his appointment to Guatemala.

"I am myself very far from sorry at our change of destination. I prefer the Bosphorus to the Bay of Dublin, and like Pera better than the Phoenix. It is not alone that the interests are greater, the questions larger, and the consequences more important to the world at large, but that, as my uncle has just said, you are spared the peddling impertinence of Parliament interfering at every moment, and questioning your conduct, from an invitation to Cardinal Cullen to the dismissal of a chief constable. Happily, the gentlemen at Westminster know nothing about Turkey, and have the prudence not to ventilate their ignorance, except in secret committee. I am sorry to have to tell you that my lord sees great difficulty in what you propose as to yourself. F. O., he says, would not easily consent to your being named even a third secretary without your going through the established grade of attaché. All the unquestionable merits he knows you to possess would count for nothing against an official regulation. The course my lord would suggest is this: To enter now as mere attaché, to continue in this position some three or four months, come over here for the general election in February, get into

'the House,' and after some few sessions, one or two, rejoin diplomacy, to which you might be appointed as a secretary of legation. My uncle named to me three, if not four cases of this kind—one, indeed, stepped at once into a mission and became a minister; and though of course the opposition made a fuss, they failed in their attempt to break the appointment, and the man will probably be soon an ambassador. I accept the little yataghan, but sincerely wish the present had been of less value. There is one enormous emerald in the handle which I am much tempted to transfer to a ring. Perhaps I ought, in decency, to have your permission for the change. The burnous is very beautiful, but I could not accept it—an article of dress is in the category of things impossible. Have you no Irish sisters, or even cousins? Pray give me a destination to address it to in your next.

"My uncle desires me to say that, all invaluable as your services have become where you are, he needs you greatly here, and would hear with pleasure that you were about to return. He is curious to know who wrote "L'Orient et Lord D." in the last *Revue de Deux Mondes*. The savagery of the attack implies a personal rancour. Find out the author, and reply to him in the *Edinburgh*. My lord suspects he may have had access to the papers he has already alluded to, and is the more eager to repossess them."

A telegraphic despatch in cypher was put into his hands as he was reading. It was from Lord Danesbury and said: "Come back as soon as you can, but not before making K. Pasha know his fate is in my hands."

As the Grand Vizier had already learned from the Ottoman Ambassador at London the news that Lord Danesbury was about to resume his former post at Constantinople, his Turkish impassiveness was in no way imperilled by Atlee's abrupt announcement. It is true he would have been pleased had the English Government sent out some one new to the East and a stranger to all Oriental questions. He would have liked one of those veterans of diplomacy versed in the old-fashioned ways and knaveries of German courts, and whose shrewdest ideas of a subtle policy are centred in a few social spies and a "Cabinet Noir." The Pasha had no desire to see there a man who knew all the secret machinery of a Turkish administration, what corruption could do, and where to look for the men who could employ it.

The thing was done, however, and with that philosophy of resignation to a fact in which no nation can rival his own, he muttered his polite congratulations on the event, and declared that the dearest wish of his heart was now accomplished.

"We had half begun to believe you had abandoned us, Mr. Atlee," said he. "When England commits her interests to inferior men, she usually means to imply that they are worth nothing better. I am rejoiced to see that we are, at last, awakened from this delusion. With his Excellency Lord Danesbury here, we shall be soon once more where we have been."

"Your fleet is in effective condition, well armed, and well disciplined?"

"All, all," smiled the Pasha.

"The army reformed, the artillery supplied with the most efficient guns, and officers of European services encouraged to join your staff?"

"All."

"Wise economies in your financial matters, close supervision in the collection of the revenue, and searching inquiries where abuses exist?"

"All."

"Especial care that the administration of justice should be beyond even the malevolence of distrust, that men of station and influence should be clear-handed and honourable, not a taint of unfairness to attach to them?"

"Be it all so," ejaculated the Pasha, blandly.

"By the way, I am reminded by a line I have just received from his Excellency with reference to Sulina, or was it Galatz?"

The Pasha could not decide, and he went on:

"I remember, it is Galatz. There is some curious question there of a concession for a line of railroad, which a Servian commissioner had the skill to obtain from the Cabinet here, by a sort of influence which our Stock Exchange people in London scarcely regard as regular."

The Pasha nodded to imply attention, and smoked on as before.

"But I weary your Excellency," said Atlee, rising, "and my real business here is accomplished."

"Tell my lord that I await his arrival with impatience, that of all pending questions none shall receive solution till he comes, that I am the very least of his servants." And with an air of most dignified sincerity, he bowed him out, and Atlee hastened away to tell his chief that he had "squared the Turk," and would sail on the morrow.

CHAPTER LXIII.

ATLEE ON HIS TRAVELS.

ON board the Austrian Lloyd's steamer in which he sailed from Constantinople, Joseph Atlee employed himself in the composition of a small volume purporting to be *The Experiences of a Two Years' Residence in Greece*. In an opening chapter of this work he had modestly intimated to the reader how an intimate acquaintance with the language and literature of modern Greece, great opportunities of mixing with every class and condition of the people, a mind well stored with classical acquirements and thoroughly versed in antiquarian lore, a strong poetic temperament and the feeling of an artist for scenery, had all contrived to give him a certain fitness for his task; and by the extracts from his diary it would be seen on what terms of freedom he conversed with ministers and ambassadors, even with royalty itself.

A most pitiless chapter was devoted to the exposure of the mistakes and misrepresentations of a late *Quarterly* article called "Greece and her

Protectors," whose statements were the more mercilessly handled and ridiculed that the paper in question had been written by himself, and the sarcastic allusions to the sources of the information not the less pungent on that account.

That the writer had been admitted to frequent audiences of the King, that he had discussed with his Majesty the cutting of the Isthmus of Corinth, that the King had seriously confided to him his belief that, in the event of his abdication, the Ionian Islands must revert to him as a personal appanage, the terms on which they were annexed to Greece being decided by lawyers to bear this interpretation—all these Atlee denied of his own knowledge, and asked the reader to follow him into the royal cabinet for his reasons.

When, therefore, he heard that from some damage to the machinery the vessel must be detained some days at Syra to refit, Atlee was scarcely sorry that necessity gave him an opportunity to visit Athens.

A little about Ulysses and a good deal about Lord Byron, a smattering of Grote, and a more perfect memory of About, were, as he owned to himself, all his Greece; but he could answer for what three days in the country would do for him, particularly with that spirit of candid inquiry he could now bring to his task, and the genuine fairness with which he desired to judge the people.

"The two years' resident" in Athens must doubtless often have dined with his Minister, and so Atlee sent his card to the Legation.

Mr. Brammell, our "present Minister at Athens," as *The Times* continued to designate him, as though to imply that the appointment might not be permanent, was an excellent man, of that stamp of which diplomacy has more—who consider that the court to which they are accredited concentrates for the time the political interests of the globe. That any one in Europe thought, read, spoke, or listened to anything but what was then happening in Greece, Mr. Brammell could not believe. That France or Prussia, Spain or Italy, could divide attention with this small kingdom; that the great political minds of the continent were not more eager to know what Comoudourous thought and Bulgaria required, than all about Bismarck and Gortschakoff, he could not be brought to conceive; and in consequence of these convictions he was an admirable Minister, and fully represented all the interests of his country.

As that admirable public instructor, the *Levant Herald*, had frequently mentioned Atlee's name, now, as the guest of Kulbash Pasha, now, as having attended some public ceremony with other persons of importance, and once as "our distinguished countryman, whose wise suggestions and acute observations have been duly accepted by the imperial cabinet," Brammell at once knew that this distinguished countryman should be entertained at dinner, and he sent him an invitation. That habit—so popular of late years—to send out some man from England to do something at a foreign court that the British Ambassador or Minister there either has not done, or cannot do, possibly ought never to do, had invested

Atlee in Brammell's eyes with the character of one of those semi-accredited inscrutable people whose function it would seem to be to make us out the most meddlesome people in Europe.

Of course Brammell was not pleased to see him at Athens, and he ran over all the possible contingencies he might have come for. It might be the old Greek loan, which was to be raked up again as a new grievance. It might be the pensions that they would not pay, or the brigands that they would not catch—pretty much for the same reasons—that they could not. It might be that they wanted to hear what Tsousicheff, the new Russian Minister, was doing, and whether the farce of the "Grand Idem" was advertised for repetition. It might be Crete was on the *tapis*, or it might be the question of the Greek envoy to the Porte that the Sultan refused to receive, and which promised to turn out a very pretty quarrel if only adroitly treated.

The more Brammell thought of it, the more he felt assured this must be the reason of Atlee's visit, and the more indignant he grew that extra-official means should be employed to investigate what he had written seventeen despatches to explain—seventeen despatches, with nine "enclosures," and a "private and confidential," about to appear in a blue-book.

To make the dinner as confidential as might be, the only guests besides Atlee were a couple of yachting Englishmen, a German Professor of Archaeology, and the American Minister, who, of course speaking no language but his own, could always be escaped from by a digression into French, German, or Italian.

Atlee felt, as he entered the drawing-room, that the company was what he irreverently called afterwards a scratch team, and with an almost equal quickness he saw that he himself was the "personage" of the entertainment, the "man of mark" of the party.

The same tact which enabled him to perceive all this, made him especially guarded in all he said, so that his host's efforts to unveil his intentions and learn what he had come for were complete failures. "Greece was a charming country.—Greece was the parent of any civilization we boasted.—She gave us those ideas of architecture with which we raised that glorious temple at Kensington, and that taste for sculpture which we exhibited near Apsley House.—Aristophanes gave us our comic drama, and only the defaults of our language made it difficult to show why the Member for Cork did not more often recall Demosthenes."

As for insolvency, it was a very gentleman-like failing; while brigandage was only what Sheil used to euphemize as "the wild justice" of noble spirits, too impatient for the sluggard steps of slow redress, and too proud not to be self-reliant.

Thus excusing and extenuating wherein he could not flatter, Atlee talked on the entire evening, till he sent the two Englishmen home heartily sick of a bombastic eulogy on the land where a pilot had run their cutter on a rock, and a revenue officer had seized all their tobacco.

The German had retired early, and the Yankee hastened to his lodgings to "jot down" all the fine things he could commit to his next despatch home, and overwhelm Mr. Seward with an array of historic celebrities such as had never been seen at Washington.

"They're gone at last," said the Minister. "Let us have our cigar on the terrace."

The unbounded frankness, the unlimited trustfulness that now ensued between these two men, was charming. Brammell represented one hard worked and sorely tried in his country's service; the perfect slave of office, spending nights long at his desk, but not appreciated, not valued at home. It was delightful, therefore, to him, to find a man like Atlee, to whom he could tell this—could tell for what an ungrateful country he toiled, what ignorance he sought to enlighten, what actual stupidity he had to counteract. He spoke of the Office,—from his tone of horror it might have been the Holy Office,—with a sort of tremulous terror and aversion: the absurd instructions they sent him, the impossible things he was to do, the inconceivable lines of policy he was to insist on: how but for him the King would abdicate, and a Russian protectorate be proclaimed; how the revolt at Athens would be proclaimed in Thessaly: how Skulkeffoff, the Russian general, was waiting to move into the provinces "at the first check my policy shall receive here," cried he. "I shall show you on this map; and here are the names, armament and tonnage, of a hundred and ninety-four gun-boats now ready at Nicholief to move down on Constantinople."

Was it not strange, was it not worse than strange, after such a show of unbounded confidence as this, Atlee would reveal nothing? Whatever his grievances against the people he served—and who is without them?—he would say nothing, he had no complaint to make. Things he admitted were bad, but they might be worse. The monarchy existed still, and the House of Lords was, for a while at least, tolerated. Ireland was disturbed, but not in open rebellion; and if we had no army to speak of, we still had a navy, and even the present Admiralty only lost about five ships a year!

Till long after midnight did they fence with each other, with buttons on their foils—very harmlessly no doubt, but very uselessly too; Brammell could make nothing of a man who neither wanted to hear about finance or taxation, court scandal, schools, or public robbery; and though he could not in so many words ask,—What have you come for? why are you here? he said this in full fifty different ways for three hours and more.

"You make some stay amongst us, I trust?" said the Minister, as his guest rose to take leave. "You mean to see something of this interesting country before you leave?"

"I fear not; when the repairs to the steamer enable her to put to sea, they are to let me know by telegraph, and I shall join her."

"Are you so pressed for time that you cannot spare us a week or two?"

"Totally impossible! Parliament will sit in January next, and I must hasten home."

This was to imply that he was in the House, or that he expected to be, or that he ought to be, and, even if he were not, that his presence in England was all-essential to somebody who was in Parliament, and for whom his information, his explanation, his accusation, or anything else, was all needed, and so Brammell read it and bowed accordingly.

"By the way," said the Minister, as the other was leaving the room, and with that sudden abruptness of a wayward thought, "we have been talking of all sorts of things and people, but not a word about what we are so full of here. How is this difficult about the new Greek envoy to the Porte to end? You know of course the Sultan refuses to receive him?"

"The Pasha told me something of it, but I confess to have paid little attention. I treated the matter as insignificant."

"Insignificant! You cannot mean that an affront so openly administered as this, the greatest national offence that could be offered, is insignificant?" and then with a volubility that smacked very little of want of preparation, he ran over how the idea of sending a particular man, long compromised by his complicity in the Cretan revolt, to Constantinople, came from Russia, and that the opposition of the Porte to accept him was also Russian. "I got to the bottom of the whole intrigue. I wrote home how Tsousicheff was nursing this new quarrel. I told our people facts of the Muscovite policy that they never got a hint of from their ambassador at St. Petersburg."

"It was rare luck that we had you here: good-night, good-night," said Atlee as he buttoned his coat.

"More than that, I said, 'If the Cabinet here persist in sending Kostalergi——'"

"Whom did you say? What name was it you said?"

"Kostalergi—the Prince. As much a Prince as you are. First of all, they have no better; and, secondly, this is the most consummate adventurer in the East."

"I should like to know him. Is he here—at Athens?"

"Of course he is. He is waiting till he hears the Sultan will receive him."

"I should like to know him," said Atlee, more seriously.

"Nothing easier. He comes here every day. Will you meet him at dinner to-morrow?"

"Delighted! but then I should like a little conversation with him in the morning. Perhaps you would kindly make me known to him?"

"With sincere pleasure. I'll write and ask him to dine—and I'll say that you will wait on him. I'll say, 'My distinguished friend Mr. Atlee, of whom you have heard, will wait on you about eleven or twelve.' Will that do?"

"Perfectly. So then I may make my visit on the presumption of being expected?"

"Certainly. Not that Kostalergi wants much preparation. He plays baccara all night, but he is at his desk at six."

"Is he rich?"

"Hasn't a sixpence—but plays all the same. And what people are more surprised at, pays when he loses. If I had not already passed an evening in your company, I should be bold enough to hint to you the need of caution—great caution—in talking with him."

"I know—I am aware," said Atlee, with a meaning smile.

"You will not be misled by his cunning, Mr. Atlee, but beware of his candour."

"I will be on my guard. Many thanks for the caution. Good-night! —once more, good-night!"

CHAPTER LXIV.

GREEK MEETS GREEK.

So excited did Atlee feel about meeting the father of Nina Kostalergi—of whose strange doings and adventurous life he had heard much—that he scarcely slept the entire night. It puzzled him greatly to determine in what character he should present himself to this crafty Greek. Political amateurship was now so popular in England, that he might easily enough pass off for one of those "Bulls" desirous to make himself up on the Greek question. This was a part that offered no difficulty. "Give me five minutes of any man—a little longer with a woman—and I'll know where his sympathies incline to." This was a constant boast of his, and not altogether a vain one. He might be an archaeological traveller eager about new-discovered relics and curious about ruined temples. He might be a yachting man, who only cared for Salamis as good anchorage, nor thought of the Acropolis, except as a point of departure; or he might be one of those myriads who travel without knowing where, or caring why; airing their *ennui* now at Thebes, now at Trolhattan; a weariful dispirited race, who rarely look so thoroughly alive as when choosing a cigar or changing their money. There was no reason why the "distinguished Mr. Atlee" might not be one of these—he was accredited, too, by his Minister and his "solidarity," as the French call it, was beyond question.

While yet revolving these points, a cavass—with much gold in his jacket, and a voluminous petticoat of white calico—came to inform him that his Excellency the Prince hoped to see him at breakfast at eleven o'clock; and it now only wanted a few minutes of that hour. Atlee detained the messenger to show him the road, and at last set out.

Traversing one dreary, ill-built street after another, they arrived at last at what seemed a little lane, the entrance to which carriages were denied by a line of stone posts, at the extremity of which a small green gate

appeared in a wall. Pushing this wide open, the cavass stood respectfully, while Atlee passed in, and found himself in what for Greece was a garden. There were two fine palm-trees, and a small scrub of oleanders and dwarf cedars that grew around a little fish-pond, where a small Triton in the middle, with distended cheeks, should have poured forth a refreshing jet of water, but his lips were dry, and his conch-shell empty, and the muddy tank at his feet a mere surface of broad water-lilies convulsively shaken by bull-frogs. A short shady path led to the house, a two-storied edifice, with the external stair of wood that seemed to crawl round it on every side.

In a good-sized room of the ground-floor Atlee found the Prince awaiting him. He was confined to a sofa by a slight sprain, he called it, and apologized for his not being able to rise.

The Prince, though advanced in years, was still handsome; his features had all the splendid regularity of their Greek origin: but in the enormous orbits, of which the tint was nearly black, and the indented temples, traversed by veins of immense size, and the firm compression of his lips, might be read the signs of a man who carried the gambling spirit into every incident of life, one ready "to back his luck," and show a bold front to fortune when fate proved adverse.

The Greek's manner was perfect. There was all the ease of a man used to society, with a sort of half-sly courtesy, as he said, "This is kindness, Mr. Atlee—this is real kindness. I scarcely thought an Englishman would have the courage to call upon anything so unpopular as I am."

"I have come to see you and the Parthenon, Prince, and I have begun with you."

"And you will tell them, when you get home, that I am not the terrible revolutionist they think me: that I am neither Danton nor Félix Pyat, but a very mild and rather tiresome old man, whose extreme violence goes no further than believing that people ought to be masters in their own house, and that when any one disputes the right, the best thing is to throw him out of the window."

"If he will not go by the door," remarked Atlee.

"No, I would not give him the chance of the door. Otherwise you make no distinction between your friends and your enemies. It is by the mild methods—what you call "milk-and-water methods"—men spoil all their efforts for freedom. You always want to cut off somebody's head and spill no blood. There's the mistake of those Irish rebels: they tell me they have courage, but I find it hard to believe them."

"Do believe them then, and know for certain that there is not a braver people in Europe."

"How do you keep them down, then?"

"You must not ask *me* that, for I am one of them."

"You Irish?"

"Yes, Irish—very Irish."

"Ah! I see. Irish in an English sense? Just as there are Greeks here who believe in Kulbas Pasha, and would say, Stay at home and till your currant-fields and mind your coasting-trade. Don't try to be civilized, for civilization goes badly with brigandage, and scarcely suits trickery. And you are aware, Mr. Atlee, that trickery and brigandage are more to Greece than olives or dried figs."

There was that of mockery in the way he said this, and the little smile that played about his mouth when he finished, that left Atlee in considerable doubt how to read him.

"I study your newspapers, Mr. Atlee," resumed he. "I never omit to read your *Times*, and I see how my old acquaintance, Lord Danesbury, has been making Turkey out of Ireland! It is so hard to persuade an old ambassador that you cannot do everything by corruption!"

"I scarcely think you do him justice."

"Poor Danesbury," ejaculated he sorrowfully.

"You opine that his policy is a mistake?"

"Poor Danesbury!" said he again.

"He is one of our ablest men, notwithstanding. At this moment we have not his superior in anything."

"I was going to say, Poor Danesbury, but I now say, Poor England."

Atlee bit his lip with anger at the sarcasm, but went on: "I infer you are not aware of the exact share subordinates have had in what you call Lord Danesbury's Irish blunders——"

"Pardon my interrupting you, but a really able man has no subordinates. His inferior agents are so thoroughly absorbed by his own individuality that they have no wills—no instincts—and, therefore, they can do no indiscretions. They are the simple emanations of himself in action."

"In Turkey, perhaps," said Atlee with a smile.

"If in Turkey, why not in England, or, at least, in Ireland? If you are well served—and mind, you must be well served, or you are powerless—you can always in political life see the adversary's hand. That he sees yours, is of course true: the great question then is, how much you mean to mislead him by the showing it? I give you an instance: Lord Danesbury's cleverest stroke in policy here, the one hit probably he made in the East, was to have a private correspondence with the Khedive made known to the Russian Embassy, and induce Gortschakoff to believe that he could not trust the Pasha! All the Russian preparations to move down on the Provinces were countermanded. The stores of grain that were being made on the Pruth were arrested, and three, nearly four weeks elapsed before the mistake was discovered, and in that interval England had reinforced the squadron at Malta, and taken steps to encourage Turkey—always to be done by money, or promise of money."

"It was a *coup* of great adroitness," said Atlee.

"It was more," cried the Greek with elation. "It was a move of such subtlety as smacks of something higher than the Saxon! The men who

do these things have the instinct of their craft. It is theirs to understand that chemistry of human motives by which a certain combination results in effects totally remote from the agents that produce it. Can you follow me?"

"I believe I can."

"I would rather say, Is my attempt at an explanation sufficiently clear to be intelligible?"

Atlee looked fixedly at him, and he could do so unobserved, for the other was now occupied in preparing his pipe, without minding the question. Therefore Atlee set himself to study the features before him. It was evident enough, from the intensity of his gaze and a certain trembling of his upper lip, that the scrutiny cost him no common effort. It was, in fact, the effort to divine what, if he mistook to read aright, would be an irreparable blunder.

With the long-drawn inspiration a man makes before he adventures a daring feat, he said: "It is time I should be candid with you, Prince. It is time I should tell you that I am in Greece only to see you."

"To see me?" said the other, and a very faint flush passed across his face.

"To see you," said Atlee, slowly, while he drew out a pocket-book and took from it a letter. "This," said he, handing it, "is to your address." The words on the cover were M. Spiridionides.

"I am Spiridion Kostalergi, and by birth a Prince of Delos," said the Greek, waving back the letter.

"I am well aware of that, and it is only in perfect confidence that I venture to recall a past that your Excellency will see I respect," and Atlee spoke with an air of deference.

"The antecedents of the men who serve this country are not to be measured by the artificial habits of a people who regulate condition by money. Your statesmen have no need to be journalists, teachers, tutors; Frenchmen and Italians are all these, and on the Lower Danube and in Greece we are these and something more.—Nor are we less politicians than we are more men of the world.—The little of statecraft that French Emperor ever knew, he picked up in his days of exile." All this he blurted out in short and passionate bursts, like an angry man who was trying to be logical in his anger, and to make an effort of reason subdue his wrath.

"If I had not understood these things as you yourself understand them, I should not have been so indiscreet as to offer you that letter," and once more he proffered it.

This time the Greek took it, tore open the envelope, and read it through.

"It is from Lord Danesbury," said he at length. "When we parted last I was, in a certain sense, my lord's subordinate—that is, there were things none of his staff of secretaries or attaches or dragomen could do, and I could do them. Times are changed, and if we are to meet

again, it will be as colleagues. It is true, Mr. Atlee, the Ambassador of England and the Envoy of Greece are not exactly of the same rank. I do not permit myself many illusions, and this is not one of them; but remember, if Great Britain be a first-rate Power, Greece is a volcano. It is for us to say when there shall be an eruption."

It was evident, from the rambling tenor of this speech, he was speaking rather to conceal his thoughts and give himself time for reflection, than to enunciate any definite opinion; and so Atlee, with native acuteness, read him, as he simply bowed a cold assent.

"Why should I give him back his letters?" burst out the Greek warmly. "What does he offer me in exchange for them? Money! mere money! By what presumption does he assume that I must be in such want of money, that the only question should be the sum? May not the time come when I shall be questioned in our chamber as to certain matters of policy, and my only vindication be the documents of this same English ambassador, written in his own hand and signed with his name? Will you tell me that the triumphant assertion of a man's honour is not more to him than bank-notes?"

Though the heroic spirit of this speech went but a short way to deceive Atlee, who only read it as a plea for a higher price, it was his policy to seem to believe every word of it, and he looked a perfect picture of quiet conviction.

"You little suspect what these letters are?" said the Greek.

"I believe I know: I rather think I have a catalogue of them and their contents," mildly hinted the other.

"Ah! indeed, and are you prepared to vouch for the accuracy and completeness of your list?"

"You must be aware it is only my lord himself can answer that question."

"Is there—in your enumeration—is there the letter about Crete? and the false news that deceived the Baron de Baude? Is there the note of my instructions to the Khedive? Is there—I'm sure there is not—any mention of the negotiation with Stephanotis Bey?"

"I have seen Stephanotis, myself; I have just come from him," said Atlee, grasping at the escape the name offered.

"Ah, you know the old Palikao?"

"Intimately; we are, I hope, close friends; he was at Kulbash Pasha's while I was there, and we had much talk together."

"And from him it was you learned that Spiridionides was Spiridion Kostalergi?" said the Greek slowly.

"Surely this is not meant as a question, or, at least, a question to be answered?" said Atlee smiling.

"No, no, of course not," replied the other politely. "We are chatting together, if not like old friends, like men who have every element to become dear friends. We see life pretty much from the same point of view, Mr. Atlee, is it not so?"

"It would be a great flattery to me to think it." And Joe's eyes sparkled as he spoke.

"One has to make his choice somewhat early in the world, whether he will hunt or be hunted : I believe that is about the case."

"I suspect so."

"I did not take long to decide ; *I took my place with the wolves !*" Nothing could be more quietly uttered than these words ; but there was a savage ferocity in his look as he said them that held Atlee almost spell-bound. "And you, Mr. Atlee ? and you ? I need scarcely ask where *your* choice fell ! "

It was so palpable that the words meant a compliment, Atlee had only to smile a polite acceptance of them.

"These letters," said the Greek, resuming, and like one who had not mentally lapsed from the theme—"these letters are all that my lord deems them. They are the very stuff that, in your country of publicity and free discussion, would make or mar the very best reputations amongst you. And," added he, after a pause, "there are none of them destroyed, none ! "

"He is aware of that."

"No, he is not aware of it to the extent I speak of, for many of the documents that he believed he saw burned in his own presence, on his own hearth, are here, here in the room we sit in ! So that I am in the proud position of being able to vindicate his policy, in many cases where his memory might prove weak or fallacious."

"Although I know Lord Danesbury's value for these papers does not bear out your own, I will not suffer myself to discuss the point. I return at once to what I have come for. Shall I make you an offer in money for them, Monsieur Kostalergi ? "

"What is the amount you propose ? "

"I was to negotiate for a thousand pounds first. I was to give two thousand at the last resort. I will begin at the last resort and pay you two."

"Why not piastres, M. Atlee ? I'm sure your instructions must have said piastres."

Quite unmoved by the sarcasm, Atlee took out his pocket-book and read from a memorandum :—"Should M. Kostalergi refuse your offer, or think it insufficient, on no account let the negotiation take any turn of acrimony or recrimination. He has rendered me great services in past times, and it will be for himself to determine whether he should do or say what should in any way bar our future relations together."

"This is not a menace ? " said the Greek, smiling superciliously.

"No. It is simply an instruction," said the other, after a slight hesitation.

"The men who make a trade of diplomacy," said the Greek, haughtily, "reserve it for their dealings with cabinets. In home or familiar intercourse they are straightforward and simple. Without these papers your

noble master cannot return to Turkey as ambassador. Do not interrupt me. He cannot come back as ambassador to the Porte ! It is for him to say how he estimates the post. An ambitious man, with ample reason for his ambition, an able man with a thorough conviction of his ability, a patriotic man, who understood and saw the services he could render to his country, would not bargain at the price the place should cost him, nor say ten thousand pounds too much to pay for it."

"Ten thousand pounds!" exclaimed Atlee, but in real and unfeigned astonishment.

"I have said ten thousand, and I will not say nine—nor nine thousand nine hundred."

Atlee slowly arose and took his hat. "I have too much respect for yourself and for your time, M. Kostalergi, to impose any longer on your leisure. I have no need to say that your proposal is totally unacceptable."

"You have not heard it all, sir. The money is but a part of what I insist on. I shall demand, besides, that the British Ambassador at Constantinople shall formally support my claim to be received as Envoy from Greece, and that the whole might of England be pledged to the ratification of my appointment."

A very cold but not uncourteous smile was all Atlee's acknowledgment of this speech.

"There are small details which regard my title and the rank that I lay claim to. With these I do not trouble you. I will merely say I reserve them if we should discuss this in future."

"Of that there is little prospect. Indeed, I see none whatever. I may say this much, however, Prince, that I shall most willingly undertake to place your claims to be received as Minister for Greece at the Porte under Lord Danesbury's notice and, I have every hope, for favourable consideration. We are not likely to meet again: may I assume that we part friends?"

"You only anticipate my own sincere desire."

As they passed slowly through the garden, Atlee stopped and said : "Had I been able to tell my lord 'The Prince is just named special envoy at Constantinople. The Turks are offended at something he has done in Crete, or Thessaly. Without certain pressure on the Divan they will not receive him. Will your lordship empower me to say that you will undertake this, and, moreover, enable me to assure him that all the cost and expenditure of his outfit shall be met, in a suitable form.' If, in fact, you give me your permission to submit such a basis as this, I should leave Athens far happier than I feel now."

"The Chamber has already voted the outfit. It is very modest, but it is enough. Our national resources are at a low ebb. You might, indeed—that is, if you still wished to plead my cause—you might tell my lord that I had destined this sum as the fortune of my daughter. I have a daughter, Mr. Atlee, and at present sojourning in your own country. And though at one time I was minded to recall her, and take her with me to

Turkey, I have grown to doubt whether it would be a wise policy. Our Greek contingencies are too many and too sudden to let us project very far in life."

"Strange enough," said Atlee thoughtfully, "you have just—as it were by mere hazard—struck the one chord in the English nature, that will always respond to the appeal of a home affection. Were I to say, 'Do you know why Kostalergi makes so hard a bargain? It is to endow a daughter. It is the sole provision he stipulates to make her,—Greek statesmen can amass no fortunes,—this hazard will secure the girl's future!' On my life, I cannot think of one argument that would have equal weight."

Kostalergi smiled faintly, but did not speak.

"Lord Danesbury never married, but I know with what interest and affection he follows the fortunes of men who live to secure the happiness of their children. It is the one plea he could not resist; to be sure he might say, 'Kostalergi told you this, and perhaps at the time he himself believed it; but how can a man who likes the world and its very costliest pleasures, guard himself against his own habits? Who is to pledge his honour, that the girl will ever be the owner of this sum?'"

"I shall place *that* beyond a cavil or a question; he shall be himself her guardian. The money shall not leave his hands till she marries. You have your own laws, by which a man can charge his estate with the payment of a certain amount. My lord, if he assents to this, will know how it may be done. I repeat, I do not desire to touch a drachma of the sum."

"You interest me immensely. I cannot tell you how intensely I feel interested in all this. In fact, I shall own to you frankly, that you have at last employed an argument, I do not know how,—even if I wished,—to answer. Am I at liberty to state this pretty much as you have told it?"

"Every word of it."

"Will you go further—will you give me a little line, a memorandum in your own hand, to show that I do not misstate, nor mistake you—that I have your meaning correctly, and without even a chance of error?"

"I will write it formally and deliberately."

The bell of the outer door rang at the moment. It was a telegraphic message to Atlee, to say that the steamer had perfected her repairs and would sail that evening.

"You mean to sail with her?" asked the Greek. "Well, within an hour, you shall have my packet. Good-by. I have no doubt we shall hear of each other again."

"I think I could venture to bet on it," were Atlee's last words as he turned away.

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